HE WOMEN OF HAKESPEARE

RANK HARRIS

DUKE
UNIVERSITY

WOMAN'S COLLEGE

LIBRARY

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Duke University Libraries

https://archive.org/details/womenofshakespea01harr

THE WOMEN OF SHAKESPEARE

BY

FRANK HARRIS

NEW YORK
MITCHELL KENNERLEY
MCMXII

Copyright 1912 by
Mitchell Kennerley

THE WOMEN OF SHAKESPEARE

BY FRANK HARRIS

THE MAN SHAKESPEARE
MONTES THE MATADOR
THE BOMB

At all bookshops

The Women of Shakespeare

PTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	ix
I.	Tamora: Margaret: Joan of Arc . . .	1
I.	His Wife: Adriana, The Scold: Katharina, The Shrew: Constance, The Termagant . .	21
	... Vanity: How Women Woo!— ... Dream: The Two ...ll's Well . .	51
	...s Love:—Juliet: Portia: ...d: Viola . . .	67
	...ograph of His Love: Love's ...st: Rosaline Again . . .	91
	...ts: The Lover's Complaint: Shake-...e's Dark Mistress	115
	...'s Well that Ends Well: Helena and Bertram: Mary Fitton and Lord Herbert . . .	133
I.	Julius Cæsar: Hamlet: Othello . . .	161
I.	Lear and Timon: Erotic Mania . . .	181
I.	Troilus and Cressida: False Cressid—"The Heart's Blood of Beauty;" Love's Invisible Soul	197
I.	Antony and Cleopatra: Cleopatra-Fitton: "Witchery joins with Beauty, Lust with Both!"	214
.	Coriolanus: Volumnia, The Portrait of Shakespeare's Mother	237
.	Shakespeare's Daughter Judith as Marina, Perdita, and Miranda	247
.	A Last Word about Shakespeare's Passion: The Passionate Pilgrime: King Henry VIII. .	276
	INDEX	305

BY FRANK HARRIS

THE MAN SHAKESPEARE
MONTES THE MATADOR
THE BOMB

At all books...

The Women of Shakespeare

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	ix
I.	Tamora: Margaret: Joan of Arc . . .	1
II.	His Wife: Adriana, The Scold: Katharina, The Shrew: Constance, The Termagant . .	21
III.	The Salve to Vanity: How Women Woo!—The Midsummer Night's Dream: The Two Gentlemen of Verona: All's Well . .	51
IV.	Idealistic Studies of His Love:—Juliet: Portia: Beatrice: Rosalind: Viola . . .	67
V.	The Great Photograph of His Love: Love's Labour's Lost: Rosaline Again . . .	91
VI.	The Sonnets: The Lover's Complaint: Shakespeare's Dark Mistress	115
VII.	All's Well that Ends Well: Helena and Bertram: Mary Fitton and Lord Herbert . . .	133
VIII.	Julius Cæsar: Hamlet: Othello . . .	161
IX.	Lear and Timon: Erotic Mania . . .	181
X.	Troilus and Cressida: False Cressid—"The Heart's Blood of Beauty;" Love's Invisible Soul	197
XI.	Antony and Cleopatra: Cleopatra - Fitton: "Witchery joins with Beauty, Lust with Both!"	214
XII.	Coriolanus: Volumnia, The Portrait of Shakespeare's Mother	237
XIII.	Shakespeare's Daughter Judith as Marina, Perdita, and Miranda	247
XIV.	A Last Word about Shakespeare's Passion: The Passionate Pilgrime: King Henry VIII. .	276
	INDEX	305

for real!

INTRODUCTION

CRITICISM is the mission of the prophet: the act of Paul announcing to a market-crowd of heedless and profane foreigners, "an unknown God." In this spirit I called my first critical work, *The Man Shakespeare*—Ecce Homo!

Criticism is an act of worship, a dedication of the spirit in love and an interpretation of the divine, the result of intimate communion of soul. As such an interpretation I put forth *The Women of Shakespeare.*

I had thought of calling it *The Woman Shakespeare;* for the woman a man loves is the ideal in himself; the veiled goddess who corresponds to all the desires, conscious and unconscious, of his nature as lock to key, as light to the eye. These are correlatives and suppose and complete each other. To find fault therefore with the woman one loves is to blame oneself. He alone fails to win her who fails to possess himself: she was

his from the beginning if he be all he might be: failure here even in degree is tragic.

It would only be necessary then to reproduce faithfully the portrait Shakespeare has given of his mistress in order to describe him to the life for all those who have eyes to see. This book, as I conceived it, is in essence complementary to *The Man Shakespeare*. Here again Shakespeare will reveal himself as the gentle, irresolute, meditative poet-thinker-lover we learned to know in Orsino-Hamlet-Antony, an aristocrat of most delicate sensibilities and sympathetic humour whose chief defects are snobbishness and overpowering sensuality, if indeed this latter quality is not to be reckoned as a virtue in an artist or at least as an endowment. But the public would probably have misunderstood the title *The Woman Shakespeare,* and so I changed it to *The Women of Shakespeare* in order also to mention and describe all the women who in any conspicuous degree entered into the poet's life or at least affected his art. There were four of them: his mother, his wife, his mistress and his daughter.

His jealous scolding shrew wife, who was eight years his senior, overshadowed, as we shall see, all his early manhood, and left her bitter mark on most of his youthful work.

We have an extraordinary, vivid spirit-photograph of her, so to speak, as Adriana in the *Comedy of Errors:* her furious temper forces itself to view again where ill-temper is utterly out of place in the raging, raving Constance of *King John,* and again in Katharine in *The Taming of the Shrew.*

The shadow cast by his bitter nagging wife was exorcised by the advent in 1596-7 of that "queen of Beauty" who changed the world for Shakespeare, and was, I believe, the maid-of-honour, Mary Fitton.

We have a realistic snapshot of her in Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet,* a superb photograph of her as Rosaline again in *Love's Labour's Lost;* idealistic happy impressions of her in Julia, Juliet, Portia, Beatrice, and Rosalind; passionate full-length pictures of her in the Sonnets, and again as "false Cressid," and finally a triumphant living, breathing portrait of her in *Cleopatra*—a world's masterpiece. Lady Macbeth is a mere sketch of her imperious strength and self will: Goneril a slight copy of Lady Macbeth, with lust added.

This woman dominated all Shakespeare's maturity from 1597 to 1608, and changed him, as I have said elsewhere, from a light-hearted writer

of comedies, histories and songs into the greatest man who has left record of himself in literature, the author of half-a-dozen masterpieces, whose names have become tragic symbols in the consciousness of humanity.

In 1608 Mary Fitton married for the second time and left the Court and Shakespeare for ever. Her desertion, and if you will, the passionate devotion of twelve years to her earthy-coarse service had broken down Shakespeare's health. In 1608, too, his mother died, and he returned for a year or so to village Stratford to recover some measure of health and hope.

He has given us a portrait of his mother in Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus; has told us in the play that she was the confidante of his youth: that he owed her more than any other man owed his mother: she was always to him "the noblest mother of the world."

Shakespeare spent a good part of the six or seven remaining years of his life in Stratford: he was nursed out of weakness and despair and coaxed back to "fortitude" by his younger daughter Judith, who was an "angel" to him; her modesty, purity and tenderness made a profound impression on the passion-worn poet.

He has left us portraits of her in Marina, Per-

dita and Miranda—soul-sketches which show his idealizing tendency and his exquisite poetic gift, and which also discover in their slightness and spirituality, his alarming physical weakness.

His increasing frailty induced him, he tells us, to hasten by a year the writing of *The Tempest,* his testament and legacy, as he meant it to be, to the English people: a masterpiece which contains the divinest poetry and some of the noblest teaching in the language.

The immortal significance of Shakespeare's life to me, the history of his soul is the story of his love for the imperious gypsy-wanton Mary Fitton. Till he met her at thirty-two he knew little of life and less of women: through her he came to knowledge of both and to much self-knowledge. There is nothing in all literature more enthralling, nothing more instructive than the flame-like growth of Shakespeare's soul in the "madding fever" of passion.

The conception of passion as a forcing-house of talent is new to literature and altogether foreign to the English mind; it is probably set forth here for the first time: yet Shakespeare himself is one of the best examples of the truth. When he first met his mistress his desire of her was stronger than his affection: he asked more than he

gave, and naturally suffered a martyrdom. But there was a fount of love in him and for twelve years he lived intensely, now in the seventh heaven of delight, now in the lowest hell of jealousy, rage and humiliation. All the experiences of joy and sorrow he turned to soul-profit: pain taught him pity; joy taught him lovingkindness and goodwill; suffering, sympathy; and if he had had a little more faith, faith in himself or in his love, he would have won to his heart's desire, and written the first love-song of the modern world.

This was not to be: he saw that he had failed, fallen short of the highest and in this wild remorseful mood, gave us his own epitaph by the mouth of Wolsey in *Henry VIII.:*

> . . . all my glories
> In that one woman I have lost for ever:
> No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,
> Or gild again the noble troops that waited
> Upon my smiles. Go, get thee from me, Cromwell;
> I am a poor fall'n man . . .

But this is not the whole truth about Shakespeare, not even the best part of the truth. Again and again, especially in *Hamlet* and in the *Sonnets* he shows an astonishing preoccupation about his epitaph; about what will be said of him after he has left the stage and passed into the silence.

He need have had no anxiety; the " poor fall'n man " gave us *The Tempest,* and his own triumphant words in *Antony and Cleopatra* shall live in everlasting memory of him:

> 'A rarer spirit never
> Did steer humanity . . .

For all deductions made, this Shakespeare accomplished more than any other man, went deeper into hell and rose higher into heaven than any other mortal, and what he was and how he suffered and enjoyed he has told us in great pictures flamed out on the black walls of our earth-prison for ever, and his joy of living and his " hell of time " have become to us a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night to warn and to guide.

I have tried to read the entrancing story with " love's fine wit," and to set it all down with affectionate solicitude, moved only by that spirit of truth which reveals and renews like sunlight.

Like a botanist, I have put the whole plant to view: flower and fruit, leaves and stalk and roots. Some common clay still clings to the white nerve-fibres and exhales a faint odour of mortality: but this is transmuted in the flower into perfume, and

the fruit is incomparable, the finest from the Tree of Life.

This book not only rounds out my work on Shakespeare, but it establishes for the first time his right to be considered the author of half a dozen plays or portions of plays which have been ascribed to other hands, known and unknown, by all the commentators. It will be noticed that in many cases it is my reading of his character and of his life which has enabled me to recognize with certainty the hand of the master. This new proof that my conception of Shakespeare is in the main correct must surely be conclusive.

One question and one reproach I shall not escape: I have criticized my critics in my books at some length; taken some pains to place what is called "the best knowledge of my time" as the dark background of my picture. My friends wonder whether this were wise on my part: "why lend the unimportant, significance, and give to the ephemeral, length of days?" they ask. My enemies, on the other hand, pretend to be delighted—"he cries out, therefore he's hurt," they opine smiling.

These arguments hardly exhaust the subject. There are, it seems to me, two great traditions on this matter, contradictory traditions: the one

coming from Dante, the other from Shakespeare or even perhaps from a higher source. Dante distributed his enemies conscientiously in this or that circle of Hell, catching them by the hair, as Browning phrased it, and writing their real names in letters of fire on their foreheads for ever.

Shakespeare is supposed to have passed over his critics without a word, holding himself godlike above slander and insult. This idea about Shakespeare is mistaken. He told the truth, I believe, about Chapman in the *Sonnets:* praised "the proud full sail of his great verse" while hinting that his heavy learning wanted stronger wings to lift it from the ground: and when he talked of Ajax as "a gouty Briareus . . . a purblind Argus with a hundred eyes and no sight," I feel sure he was picturing Ben Jonson and thereby answering Jonson's unfair and envious carping with more sincerity than sympathy.

Shakespeare was kindlier and wiser than Dante: he did not pursue his enemies or nail them up as vermin on some great page to eternal loathing; but now and then he did lift the dark Time-curtain and show them to us in their habit as they lived.

The best modern view of this matter is higher than Dante's or Shakespeare's; curiously enough

it nears the Christian position: "go on producing," one says, "like the earth, harvest on harvest and let your fruits speak for you. Don't waste time and temper answering the fool and the envious: all that is personal and transitory, and the artist should be intent on the enduring."

That is surely the right temper of soul; but it is hardly fair to the fool and to the envious: they, too, have their place in life, and they supply the necessary realistic details of ugliness and ignorance—the black shadows—to the picture.

How far they should be used depends on the nature of the picture, and must be left to the artist. One general rule, however, holds of necessity for the starfinder as for the faultfinder: in measure as the lights are high, the shadows will be dark.

If, indeed, the artist is one of God's spies, and has given himself in all reverence to what Coleridge called "the awful task" of unveiling the mystery of things with a passionate determination to discover and reveal the truth at any cost, he must expect the pillory, at least: he will be the cockshy of journalists and professors for a season amid the pleased laughter of the crowd. If he takes any hurt from the mouldy cabbages of pedantry or the rotten eggs of envy, he should

console himself with the knowledge that his pain will be in proportion to his own ignorance and malice. It is not given to man to injure the immortal.

FRANK HARRIS.

CHAPTER I

TAMORA: MARGARET: JOAN OF ARC

IN his famous introduction to *La Comédie Humaine* Balzac puts his finger on the weakest spot in English literature. He is astonished that Scott, who paints men so bravely and has left such excelling portraits as Balfour of Burleigh and Caleb Balderstone should have painted women so feebly—presenting them as the skimmed milk, so to speak, of humanity.

He explains the fact by the upas-like influence of Puritanism which he compares to its disadvantage with Catholicism. Balzac might have gone a step farther back, one fancies, and traced the peculiarities of the creed to racial characteristics. Tacitus was the first to notice the extraordinary chastity of the Germanic peoples; he was surprised by the value they put upon this virtue. It is this hardness in the German paste, this dislike to yield to "languishing love" which is responsible, I imagine, for the paucity and poverty

of women-portraits in German and English literature. The most representative English novel, and one of the greatest, *Robinson Crusoe,* has no love in it whatever; it is of adventurous daring and practical details all compact, and one can hardly think of our typical English heroines, the blameless, bloodless Eves, Amelias, Sophies, Amys, and Maggies without a smile. Becky Sharp even is sacrificed to the author's puritanism; the green-eyed courtesan is depicted without a soul and so remains a superb caricature. In no other literature would poets like Milton, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge have passed through life without leaving a single woman's portrait worth remembering.

It is curious, too, that only the greatest in German literature has painted a woman with any intimate understanding: Goethe's *Gretchen* is a masterpiece, and his *Mignon* is at least a fine attempt to realize a still higher ideal. It will be of interest to consider what Shakespeare has done in this field, and judge whether his portraits of women are worthy to rank with Manon Lescaut, and Madame Bovary, Gretchen, and Francesca. Our home critics, of course, put him above compare, and will rattle you off the names of a dozen Rosalinds, Perditas and Imogens with end-

less strings of laudatory epithets; but beautiful names cannot always stand for portraits, nor praise for critical appreciation, and it may be worth while once to test the matter scrupulously, for a study of it will certainly throw an intense light on Shakespeare's mind and growth.

In the course of these essays it will be seen whether the view of Shakespeare's nature which I have put forth in my book *The Man Shakespeare* is corroborated or weakened, whether the incidents of his life which I have accepted as true are further established or thrown into doubt, and above all it must now become clear whether I am trying to bend stubborn truths to fit a fantastic theory, as my opponents contend, or whether, having caught a glimpse of the truth or deduced it almost unconsciously from a thousand facts, I now find on further examination hundreds of other facts springing up on all sides to buttress and confirm it.

If we can judge Shakespeare at all by his first work, by the *Venus and Adonis,* it must be admitted that he started life with a most generous endowment of sensuality, and if we are to believe tradition, and all tradition concurs on this point, he was himself, not only handsome and well-shaped, but very gentle and courteous with most

ingratiating manners, likely, therefore, to love women and be loved by them. Because I have made this statement elsewhere, I have been accused of blasphemy and vilification in reputable English journals. Shakespeare's sensuality, it appears, is all of my seeing, a figment of my diseased imagining.

One rubs one's eyes and wonders if these critics have ever read *Venus and Adonis:* it is the most passionate love-song in the language; more intense even than Marlowe's *Hero and Leander;* more sensual than the most sensual verse of Swinburne; bare lust is pictured in it with greater detail and keener delight than in any other English poem.

Take the following passage:

Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,
And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth;
Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
Paying what ransom the insulter willeth;
Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,
That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry:

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil
With blindfold fury she begins to forage;
Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,
And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage. . . .

Venus and Adonis was immediately popular: it ran through edition after edition, and gave

Shakespeare position as a poet. Its astonishing success serves to depict the age. "It was the joy of young lovers," we are told: "Pupillus" in *The Noble Stranger* wanted it "to court his mistress by." * A severer criticism, however, made itself heard: one wished to see Shakespeare's sweet verse with its "heart-throbbing life" applied to "a graver subject": another, like Gabriel Harvey, turned from the *Venus and Adonis* in which "the younger sort take much delight" to *Lucrece.*

The curious thing is that Shakespeare's next poem, *The Rape of Lucrece,* first published in the following year, 1594, though praised at the time as both "sweet and chaste," is every whit as passionately conceived as *Venus and Adonis.* The rape is imagined as nakedly in the chaste poem and with the same lingering enjoyment as is shown in the wooing of Venus in the love-song. English critics would be put to it to explain this; but they prefer to believe that a man can outdo all others in picturing sensuality without being himself sensual. It is my "assumption," they

* *Venus and Adonis* was like those books which Horace says were to be found under the silk cushions of the Roman ladies:

> Nec non libelli stoici inter sericos
> Jacere pulvillos amant.

maintain, that the qualities seen in the painting must of necessity exist in the painter.

Shakespeare called *Venus and Adonis* "the first heir of my invention." Professor Herford, who has edited the Eversley edition which I happen to have under my hand at the moment, declares that he "probably meant that it was his first lyrical or narrative poem, and not that it preceded all his plays." I prefer to take Shakespeare's plain words and abide by them. *Venus and Adonis* was first published in 1593; but may have been written some years before. The realistic pictures in it of the hare and the horse call up the English country-side very vividly, and if I am not able without reserve to uphold Coleridge's belief that Shakespeare wrote it "in the country" before coming to London, still the conjecture has a good deal to say for itself. In 1590 the first instalment of *The Faerie Queen* appeared and Lodge's *Glaucus and Silla,* which was written in the same six-line stanza as *Venus and Adonis* with alteration of quatrain and couplet. It seems to me probable that Shakespeare took the form at least of his poem from Lodge. Rhymed verse was the poetic fashion and Shakespeare used it; but he never moved freely in it, much less as a master calling forth its latent

capacities of music and emphasis. Still Coleridge had reason perhaps to remind us that *Venus and Adonis* is full of memories of Shakespeare's early life in Stratford.

I suggested in *The Man Shakespeare* that this passionate picture of an older woman loving and tempting a "tender boy" contains in it something more than a side-glance at Shakespeare's enforced marriage with an older woman. It seems probable to me that young Shakespeare was not unwilling to excite the sympathy or pity of his high-born London friends with this picture of his misled youth. It explained his untimely marriage and the fact, too, that he had left his wife in Stratford, and would not bring her to London.

I must just note in passing that neither the lustful queen of love nor the chaste matron Lucrece lives for us in Shakespeare's verse with any individual life. The poems are companion pictures of passion and not portraits of women.

In order to trace Shakespeare's growth from the beginning, I am compelled to consider his earliest works, *Titus Andronicus* and the *First Part of King Henry VI.*, and again I find myself at variance with the professors. I have given some reasons already for thinking that much of *Titus Andronicus* was written by Shakespeare;

the professors do not agree with me, and the point is hardly worth further debate here; for I hope to handle the question at length some time or other, and for my present purpose it is sufficient to remark that Tamora is a mere fiend, and that Lavinia has no nearer relation to womanhood than her name.

I have also stated that much of the *First Part of Henry VI.* is certainly Shakespeare's; in fact, that "he wrote more than we, who have his mature work in mind are inclined to ascribe to him," and this I must now endeavour to prove, for this play marks a moment in Shakespeare's growth and is therefore necessary to my argument, and all the professor-mandarins are here leagued in battle against me. I must, therefore, clear the way a little before I go any further.

Were there no other reasons for attributing the *First Part of Henry VI.* to Shakespeare, I should be inclined to follow the first editors, Hemyng and Condell, who included it with *Titus Andronicus* in their First Folio of 1623, for I am fain to believe that those two men who played on the same stage with Shakespeare for many years must have known his work intimately. They were honest, too; scrupulous even, as Englishmen are apt to be, and erred on the right side

perhaps by refusing to include in the First Folio anything that was not undoubtedly his. They left out at least one play which he had certainly touched up and bettered, *The Two Noble Kinsmen;* but they published nothing that did not in the main belong to him. In case of doubt, therefore, it will be well to follow their authority.

A little consideration of the *First Part of Henry VI.* will show precisely the professors' procedure and what it is worth. "The view that *I. Henry VI.* was wholly the work of Shakespeare," says Professor Herford, "is now probably extinct in England," though "it is still orthodox in Germany." He goes on: "The *First Part* clearly stands apart from the other two . . . it contains a far larger mass of utterly un-Shakespearean work." The professor's drastic-bold statement derives from the fact that Coleridge asserted that part of the first scene of the first act of this *First Part* was not written by Shakespeare, and consequently the professors bettering the hint are all contemptuous in their rejection of "the greater part" of the play. Now we can kick the Germans, they say, and proceed to kick. But all good readers have been compelled to accept as Shakespeare's at least two scenes, the dispute in the Temple Gardens about

the roses and the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk. Mr. Swinburne insisted that the last battle and death of Talbot was just as undoubtedly Shakespeare's. He went on, however, to cast some doubt on the courtship of Margaret by Suffolk: "This latter, indeed, full as it is of natural and vivid grace, may not perhaps be beyond the reach of one or two among the rivals of his (Shakespeare's) earliest years of work."

Now the professors have nothing to do but register these authoritative opinions. Not one of them has ever cast a ray of light on any such disputed point. They are there to teach students the best that is known on the subject; but they can hardly be expected to add to the sum of human knowledge. That requires other and higher qualities than are given to the bookworm. But what are they to do about doubtful passages, it may be asked, when their authorities differ? They should record the difference and leave it at that; but they will obtrude their own limitations; they try to show off and usually come to grief. For example, Professor Herford in this dilemma, seeing that the wooing of Margaret is "so oddly diapered in the last act with the end of Joan; . . ." decides that "it

has very little title to be considered Shakespeare's work." After much experience of such *ex cathedra* assertions one is inclined to say, "Well roared, Bottom," and pay no further heed; for professor echoes professor as shallow sings to shallow; but it is imperative to notice an opinion of Swinburne. One word of Swinburne or Coleridge on such a point is worth all the pronouncements of all the professors since the flood; for the poets have imaginative sympathy to guide them and the professors are without such light. In this instance, however, the professors parrot Swinburne, though Swinburne is mistaken, and the motive which misled him is at hand. If he accepted the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk which precedes and follows the scene wherein Joan of Arc is libelled as never woman was libelled before or since by a poet, he would be almost compelled to ascribe the libel to Shakespeare, and this was too much for his patriotism. "That damnable last scene," he says, "at which the gorge rises even to remember it, is in execution as unlike the crudest phase of Shakespeare's style as in conception it is unlike the idlest birth of his spirit." This is very strongly put; but sweeping rhetorical statements carry little conviction. Let us bring the matter

to proof, and first let us consider the wooing. When Suffolk sees Margaret he cries:

> Oh, fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly!
> For I will touch thee but with reverent hands;
> I kiss these fingers for eternal peace,
> And lay them gently on thy tender side.
> Who art thou? say, that I may honour thee.

Surely this is Shakespeare; young Shakespeare at his best: a moment later Suffolk exclaims:

> Be not offended, nature's miracle,

and all doubt vanishes; this is Shakespeare's very voice; no one before him or since wrote like that, and the whole scene is stamped with the same seal.

And later (scene v.) when Suffolk goes on to praise Margaret to the king, one cannot but hear Shakespeare's accent, his favourite words, his bookish illustrations, everything:

> Suf. Tush, my good lord, this superficial tale
> Is but a preface of her worthy praise;
> The chief perfections of that lovely dame,
> Had I sufficient skill to utter them,
> *Would make a volume of enticing lines,*
> *Able to ravish any dull conceit:*
> And, which is more, she is not so divine,
> So full-replete with choice of all delights,
> But with as humble lowliness of mind
> She is content to be at your command;
> Command, I mean, of virtuous chaste intents,
> To love and honour Henry as her lord.

I have put the two most intimate and permanently characteristic lines in italics for the benefit of the professors and those who don't know much about Shakespeare; but the whole scene is just as indubitably his in spite of Swinburne.

Shakespeare's work in this *First Part* is not confined to the scenes already mentioned. In my book, *The Man Shakespeare,* I state: "It would be easy to prove that much of what the dying Mortimer says is just as certainly Shakespeare's work as any of the passages referred to by Mr. Swinburne." Now for the proof.

Act ii. scene 5. *Enter* MORTIMER, *brought in a chair, and* Gaolers.

MOR. Kind keepers of my weak decaying age,
Let dying Mortimer here rest himself.
Even like a man new haled from the rack,
So fare my limbs with long imprisonment;
And these grey locks, the pursuivants of death,
Nestor-like agèd in an age of care,
Argue the end of Edmund Mortimer.
These eyes, like lamps whose wasting oil is spent,
Wax dim, as drawing to their exigent. . . .

One hears Shakespeare in every word; but if any one can believe that the last two lines were written by any other hand, he is past my helping,*

* I may be called upon to prove the obvious, and therefore beg any would-be critic to notice that nearly twenty years later Shakespeare makes the dying Antony speak of the "exigent" (*Antony and Cleopatra,* Act iv. scene 12), and

and in Mortimer's very next speech, I hear the master again just as certainly. Mortimer talks of death as "the arbitrator of despairs," and goes on:

Just death, kind umpire of men's miseries,
With sweet enlargement doth dismiss me hence . . .

The very words remind me of Posthumus and his talk of "the sure physician Death . . . a way to liberty."

A little later Mortimer tells his nephew:

. . . Thy uncle is removing hence
As princes do their courts, when they are cloy'd
With long continuance in a settled place.

The whole scene is not only Shakespeare's, but Shakespeare at his most characteristic; a dying man * is as sure to catch his sympathy as a lover, and he delights in using both as a mouthpiece of his own feelings.

The more carefully I read this *First Part,* the more often I find Shakespeare in it. Swin-

Cleopatra in the very next scene describing Antony's death says, "Our lamp is spent, it's out."

* *Since writing the above I have come upon the fact that this scene is unhistorical: Edmund Mortimer was not imprisoned, and died in high office. Shakespeare took the whole scene from his imagination; it is therefore at once more characteristic and more important to us than an incident which he merely describes.*

burne was more than justified in ascribing "the last battle and death of Talbot" to Shakespeare. Practically the whole character of Talbot proclaims his handiwork.

In the third scene of the second act, Talbot tells the Countess she has entrapped him in vain:

> No, no, I am but shadow of myself:
> You are deceived, my substance is not here;
> For what you see is but the smallest part
> And least proportion of humanity. . . .

Here surely is the cunning of Shakespeare's thought, clad in characteristic phrase.

Talbot's courteous forgivingness, too, is just as certainly the gentle, generous Shakespeare's:

> What you have done hath not offended me;
> Nor other satisfaction do I crave,
> But only, with your patience, that we may
> Taste of your wine and see what cates you have;
> For soldiers' stomachs always serve them well.

To sum up briefly, there is a good deal of the first act in which I don't hear Shakespeare; but almost from the moment when Talbot comes on the stage in the second act to the very end of the play, I find proof upon proof of Shakespeare's work on nearly every page. In fact, his hand is as plainly to be seen in the last four acts of this *First Part,* as it is in the *Second* or *Third Parts:*

Talbot and Mortimer, Margaret and Suffolk are as certainly his painting as the great picture of the gentle saint Henry VI.

In depicting Margaret, Shakespeare seems to have followed history closely in a dozen different scenes. There was no doubt a clear tradition of her pride, courage, and high spirit, and these are the qualities he gives her from beginning to end, so that she becomes in his pages somewhat hard and wordy and wooden, though the opportunity offered itself to him to do better. When her young son Edward is murdered, she could have been pictured as breaking down, could have been made human for us by some touch of despairing sorrow; but no! she rails on with dreadful verbosity through scene after scene and play after play, till we are relieved when she disappears from the stage forever.

But if Shakespeare copied history closely when painting Margaret, what about Joan of Arc? Does he treat her in the same way? Or must we accept the atrocious libel on her as his? I am afraid we must, for not only is it embedded in what is indubitably his work, but the worst part of it is just such an invention as would suggest itself to him. The poets are all against me here, so I must give my reasons, must consider

carefully the whole of this portrait of Joan of Arc if, indeed, portrait it may be called.

The painting of great characters has this advantage, or disadvantage as the case may be, that every shortcoming of the painter will be revealed in the portrait; if the mirror cannot contain, or if it distorts the object, its limitations and faults must strike every one. What Shakespeare says of himself in Sonnet 121:

> . . . . they that level
> At my abuses, reckon up their own:

might well be applied to all great personages, and to none more fitly than to this heroic woman.

Shakespeare might have painted the traditional Joan of Arc of Holinshed as he painted the traditional Margaret, and no one would have been able to deduce much more than youth from his subservience. He began by doing this, then out of patriotism he went on to idealize Talbot, and consequently is almost compelled to diminish Joan's triumphs; he makes her take Rouen (which was never taken, but opened its gates seventeen years after her death) by a trick because he wants to give Talbot the glory of retaking it by sheer English courage. He puts down all her successes to witchery and sorcery, as Holinshed did, and when she is captured, he

not only repeats the usual libel on her that she pretended to be with child by this and that noble in order to prolong her life, but he blackens this libel by a suggestion made in the first act. When the Dauphin presses her to marry him, Shakespeare makes her half-promise to yield to him and talk of her "recompense," and this half-promise and the desire of reward deepen the bad impression made by her pretended confessions in the last act. But Shakespeare is not content to prove that the noble French girl is light and common and sordid, he absolutely invents a scene in which she denies her shepherd-father, and asserts that she is "nobly born" for no reason, or rather in defiance of reason; for he has already followed tradition by making Joan in the first act avow her parentage. Here is the astounding slander and self-contradiction. In the first act, speaking as the traditional *pucelle,* Joan says:

> Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
> My wit untrain'd by any kind of art,
> Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased
> To shine on my contemptible estate.
> Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs
> And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,
> God's mother deigned to appear to me
> And in a vision full of majesty
> Will'd me to leave my base vocation
> And free my country from calamity.

This is all natural enough, if not very wonderful, though even here I fancy I distinguish Shakespeare's voice particularly in the second, third, and fourth lines. In the last act, when her father claims her, this is how Joan talks to him:

> Decrepit miser! base ignoble wretch!
> I am descended of a gentler blood;
> Thou art no father nor no friend of mine.

And she is made to repeat this denial and this foolish boast again and again.

This invention does not surprise me in Shakespeare: it is all in character: Shakespeare, forgetting the previous confession and making Joan brag that she is of "nobler birth" and "issued from the progeny of kings;" it is, I repeat, all in keeping and just such a boast as would first suggest itself to Shakespeare's snobbishness. But Swinburne insists that not only is the execution cruder than Shakespeare's style, but "the conception is unlike the idlest birth of his spirit."

Now I would not attribute the scene to Shakespeare, even in youth, if I could help it, or if it stood alone; but it does not. A dozen years later he made somewhat the same fault though an infinitely smaller one when telling the story of Othello. The Moor wears "the shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun," is very dark or black

in complexion, and so inferior to the fair Venetian aristocrat, Desdemona, as Shakespeare felt himself inferior to the maid of honour whom he loved. But instead of leaving us with the pathos of this inferiority, as soon as he begins to write about Othello, he makes him brag of his " royal " descent. Shakespeare's snobbery played havoc with his art again and again though Swinburne as an Englishman has not noticed the blundering.

For years I tried to believe with the poets that this foul libel on one of the noblest of women was not written by Shakespeare; but from the beginning it was clear to me that he must have seen it and approved of it, and gradually it became manifest that he wrote in some of the worst lines of it himself. At length I had to yield to the evidence. It is his, I am afraid, from beginning to end. If any one wishes to know where Shakespeare started from, here is his lowest point. This is where he stood in 1590 or thereabouts when twenty-six years of age. This is what English patriotism and English snobbishness had done for him—his nadir, so to speak. How he swung out of it; in how vast an orbit, and what heights he reached—that is his story, and the world's wonder.

CHAPTER II

HIS WIFE: ADRIANA, THE SCOLD: KATHARINA, THE SHREW: CONSTANCE, THE TERMAGANT

THE most obvious remark about these early plays is that Shakespeare from the very beginning identified himself with the gentle, saintly, and unfortunate characters, and so realized them for us. The figure of the dying Mortimer is irradiated by the splendour of his poetry; the saintly Henry VI. lives for us like a portrait of Fra Angelico, and when he paints a mere fighting man such as Talbot, he cannot help lending him his own magnanimous generosity. Even as a youth, Shakespeare has infinitely more of the milk of human kindness in him than any other great poet. It is for this reason that the vile hard caricature of Joan of Arc is such a blot upon his work. He is more like Marcus Aurelius than Goethe or Cervantes; but even Marcus Aurelius has not his all-pitying soul, his inexhaustible sympathy. One must just notice

here, too, that he is saved from a suspicion of mawkishness by his humour; his Jack Cade is the first of those inimitable comic creations, of whom Falstaff is the crown and king.

Curiously enough in the earliest plays, Shakespeare seems to have known little or nothing about women; at least he was unable to give them artistic life. His women were at the best historical or traditional lay figures such as Venus and Lucrece and Margaret and at the worst mere masks or libels on humanity like Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* and the Joan of Arc—not a living creature among them all.

Suddenly in the crowd of lifeless marionettes we catch the hot eyes of an angry woman; she is painted French-wise, mainly by shadows or faults, and these are repeated again and again with vehement and extravagant exaggeration, the personal feeling of the painter showing itself in every stroke. Of course I am speaking of *The Comedy of Errors* and the portrait of the jealous wife, Adriana. At the moment, I am not concerned to determine whether *The Comedy of Errors* is earlier or later than the *First Part of King Henry VI.* or *Love's Labour's Lost.* It was not revised later and bettered as was *Love's Labour's Lost.* It was probably written soon

after 1589, and is certainly one of Shakespeare's earliest works.

The sketch of Adriana is crude but vivid; the woman lives for us indeed, much as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* lives mainly through ill-temper. Who is it? one naturally asks: who is the jealous railing woman who made such an impression on young Shakespeare that he cannot but paint her and make her live for us by reason of his very hatred? I say it was his wife, whom he had been forced to marry and the critics all laugh; nothing so preposterous has ever been suggested to them. What next, indeed?

Before I go on to prove that the jealous scold Adriana was a picture of Shakespeare's wife, and was deliberately intended by him for a portrait of her, let me just say that even this is not the first time that he has mentioned his forced marriage and its unhappy consequences. I have already shown that he identifies himself with the lover Suffolk in the *First Part of King Henry VI.*, and particularly in the courtship of Margaret.

When the lords oppose the choice of Margaret as queen, Suffolk exclaims:

> **A dower, my lords! disgrace not so your king,**
> **That he should be so abject, base and poor,**

To choose for wealth and not for perfect love.
Henry is able to enrich his queen
And not to seek a queen to make him rich:
So worthless peasants bargain for their wives,
As market-men for oxen, sheep, or horse.
Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship;
Not whom we will, but whom his grace affects,
Must be companion of his nuptial bed:
And therefore, lords, since he affects her most
It most of all these reasons bindeth us,
In our opinions she should be preferr'd.
For what is wedlock forced but a hell,
An age of discord and continual strife?
Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss,
And is a pattern of celestial peace.

The first two lines which I have put in italics cry for explanation. They must strike any reader as astonishing, for they are not in keeping with the circumstances; they absolutely destroy Suffolk's own argument; for, strange to say, Suffolk himself is dealing in this very matter as an "attorney," and stranger still, a little earlier in scene 3 of the same act, he applies the very word "attorney" to himself:

And yet, methinks, I could be well content
To be my own attorney in this case.

How is this confusion to be explained? Only in one way so far as I can see. In youth, even a Shakespeare has not much observation

of life with which to stuff out his characters; he is almost compelled to draw on his own experiences, to say nothing of the fact that his experiences and their vivid emotions press for utterance. But even in his earliest works Shakespeare is not apt to make a lover, whom he uses as a mouthpiece, argue against himself save for overpowering personal reasons; his own marriage, we know, had been forced on him by the attorneyship of Anne Hathaway's father's two friends, Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, and he could not forgive the interference. That is why marriage must not be "dealt in by attorneyship:" why Suffolk unconsciously is made to stultify himself.

The next passage marked in italics proves that this "assumption" of mine is correct: Suffolk talks of "wedlock forced" as "but a hell" though no one but himself is trying to force any bride upon Henry. The truth is Shakespeare has identified himself with the lover Suffolk at once, and he drags in his own painful experience though here it is worse than out of place: for it makes Suffolk condemn Suffolk's action. Manifestly Shakespeare is here thinking of his own "forced wedlock" which he found to be "a hell —an age of discord and continual strife."

Now let us consider whether these inferences are confirmed by the portrait of Adriana in *The Comedy of Errors*. The first thing I notice is that the jealous "scolding" bitter wife is out of place in the gay comedy of mistaken identity; it would be in better keeping with the spirit of the play if Adriana were a very loving and affectionate creature, for then there would be some amusement in her mistaking the wrong Antipholus for her husband, and lavishing caresses on the wrong man. Still, the critics are obdurate; they can deduce nothing from the dramatist's bad work. But to the fair-minded reader my inference (which alone explains the faulty facts) must create at least a suspicion; and now for further evidence. Almost the only thing we know certainly about Shakespeare's wife is that she was eight years older than he was. This peculiar trait has nothing to do with Adriana; moreover, it is the very last thing a jealous scolding woman would tell about herself; in the play it weakens her appeal; and yet Shakespeare makes Adriana tell it. In spite of this some English critics pooh-pooh what they persist in calling my "assumption." If we knew that Shakespeare's wife squinted and Adriana admitted that she had a cast in her eye and deplored the fact, these gentry would still say

that the simple identification was a chance coincidence.

At the risk of explaining the obvious, I shall accumulate proof on proof, warning my antagonists at the same time that there are many more weapons still unused in the armoury. For truth has a strange power of calling up evidence to its support and there is some danger that in this field even I, a hundred years hence, may be regarded as an authority, and so in turn become, dread thought! food for the professors!

I shall transcribe a couple of scenes where Adriana figures and ask my readers to notice first of all the difference between Shakespeare's painting of Adriana and her sister. Adriana is introduced to us as fretting because her husband does not return home, and her sister advises patience.

ADR. Neither my husband nor the slave return'd,
That in such haste I sent to seek his master!
Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.
LUC. Perhaps some merchant hath invited him
And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.
Good sister, let us dine and never fret:
A man is master of his liberty:
Time is their master, and when they see time
They'll go or come; if so, be patient, sister.
ADR. Why should their liberty than ours be more?
LUC. Because their business still lies out o' door.
ADR. Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.

Luc. O, know he is the bridle of your will.
Adr. There's none but asses will be bridled so.
Luc. Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.
There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beasts, the fishes and the winged fowls,
Are their males' subjects and at their controls:
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,
Indu'd with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls,
Are masters to their females, and their lords:
Then let your will attend on their accords.
Adr. This servitude makes you to keep unwed.
Luc. Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.
Adr. But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.
Luc. Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.
Adr. How if your husband start some other where?
Luc. Till he come home again, I would forbear. . . .

And so on and on.

This extraordinary scene should, I think, carry its own lesson. First of all an unmarried sister is hardly likely to be so patient as a married woman; again, an unmarried sister is not likely to take the husband's part; finally, no unmarried sister ever yet spoke in favour of a man as Luciana speaks in this long tirade against liberty which she should have addressed to the straying husband and not to the faithful wife. Manifestly, Shakespeare is making the sister Luciana, in defiance of probability, admonish and reprove his wife as he would wish her to have been ad-

monished and reproved. Adriana is as natural in jealousy and impatience as Luciana is unnatural. And she displays the same temper and impatience again and again in the following scene with Dromio of Ephesus. Indeed here she carries her ill-temper to such a pitch that she would beat the servant and again her unsisterly sister reproves her.

Then at once comes the incredible scene wherein Adriana admits her own age, and worse still admits its deforming effect:

Luc. Fie, how impatience loureth in your face!
Adr. His company must do his minions grace
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
Hath homely age the alluring beauty took
From my poor cheek? then he hath wasted it:
Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?
If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd
Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard:
Do their gay vestments his affections bait?
That's not my fault: he's master of my state:
What ruins are in me that can be found,
By him not ruin'd? then is he the ground
Of my defeatures. My decayed fair
A sunny look of his would soon repair:
But too unruly deer, he breaks the pale
And feeds from home; poor I am but his stale.

At the risk of maddening my adversaries, I must point out that every word of this weird speech throws light on Shakespeare's married

life. To take the main point first: no jealous woman would mention her age, and if she did mention it in anger, it would be to declare that it had not affected her beauty. But this Adriana confesses her age; confesses, too, that it has robbed her of her "alluring beauty"; she harps on the fact, indeed, that she is a "decayed fair." Shakespeare was cruel to poor Anne Hathaway.

Now take the first line of her speech; "his minions"; Adriana is not jealous of one in especial as women are apt to be, but of many—we shall soon see that this is Shakespeare confessing his love of gay company and an audience. Take the second line: she starves at home for "a merry look"—surely a woman would say for "a loving look"; it is again Shakespeare painting himself. Let no one think this is supersubtle; it is obvious: Shakespeare repeats the touch a few lines further on—"a sunny look": he is describing himself. Then, too, what woman would think of excusing her "dull discourses"? her "barren wit"? These are Shakespeare's charges against his wife. Again; would any woman admit in this way that the others of whom she is jealous have "gay vestments" while she has none; she would rather make this to her sister the chief reason why her husband neglects her and not the loss of

her good looks. Every word of it all is, unconsciously, a confession of young Shakespeare himself. The incredible sister continues:

Luc. Self-harming jealousy!—fie, beat it hence!
Adr. Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.
I know his eye doth homage other where:
Or else what lets it but he would be here?
Sister, you know he promised me a chain;
Would that alone, alone he would detain,
So he would keep fair quarters with his bed.
. . . . . .
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.
Luc. How many fond fools serve mad jealousy!

Shakespeare's accusation of his wife is so naïvely out of character that it serves to convict him and paints their relations even to the sensual touch in the line I have italicised.

One other thing which Adriana says, later, must be relieved out because it throws light on Shakespeare himself:

Adr. Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks. . . .

Surely these snapshots of the jealous, scolding Adriana and of merry sunny vagrant Shakespeare full of "a thousand idle pranks" in gay company may be accepted in their entirety.

But even this series of intimate pictures, all

out of place as they are in the play, do not exhaust the evidence that indeed Shakespeare is here giving us a complete account of his relations with his wife. It says much for his fairness of mind and his forgivingness of temper that he is not content to portray Adriana as a jealous scold without admitting that she had some ground for jealousy: with real dramatic insight he even goes on to fecundate her "barren wit" with reasonable arguments:

ADR. Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown:
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow
That never words were music to thine ear,
That never object pleasing to thine eye,
That never touch well welcomed to thy hand,
That never meat sweet-savour'd in thy taste,
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carv'd to thee.
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
That thou art thus estranged from thyself?
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,
That, undividable, incorporate,
Am better than thy dear self's better part.
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!
For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
And take unmingled thence that drop again,
Without addition or diminishing,
As take from me thyself and not me too.
How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious. . . .

In this vein she goes on arguing and pleading for pages.

I must now leave to my readers the other passages where Adriana's characteristics are repeated again and again, and always over-emphasized and content myself with transcribing the astounding scene at the end of the play, where Shakespeare betrays himself finally and fully, the scene in which the Abbess leads Adriana on to confess her jealous nagging and then shames her. The scene is utterly out of place; it does not advance, but retards the action; it is a blot and blunder only to be accounted for by Shakespeare's personal bitterness:

ABB. How long hath this possession held the man?
ADR. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
And much different from the man he was:
But till this afternoon his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.
ABB. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea?
Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?
ADR. To none of these, except it be the last;
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.
ABB. You should for that have reprehended him.
ADR. Why, so I did.
ABB. Ah, but not rough enough.
ADR. As roughly as my modesty would let me.
ABB. Haply, in private.

ADR. And in assemblies too.
ABB. Ay, but not enough.
ADR. It was the copy of our conference;
In bed he slept not for my urging it;
At board he fed not for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.
ABB. And therefore came it that the man was mad;
The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth. . . .

If any one in face of this carefully manufactured, ostensibly impartial, but in reality virulent condemnation can still maintain that Adriana was not meant for Shakespeare's wife, he should at least account in some other way for the hundred astonishing facts in this story which my "assumption" assuredly does explain with perfect ease and simplicity.

Shakespeare has not even left us in doubt about his attitude as a husband towards his wife. From the very beginning he has identified himself, as I have elsewhere proved, with Antipholus of Syracuse, and this is the way Antipholus-Shakespeare speaks of Adriana:

She that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor. . . .

Now there is no reason for this abhorrence in the play; on the contrary, Antipholus has been

well treated by Adriana: she has taken him to dinner, and been kind to him. How are we to explain this uncalled-for and over-emphatic condemnation? How can we account for it save by the fact that poor Shakespeare is thinking of his own forced marriage and his jealous, scolding, violent wife?

We shall soon see that the circumstances of Shakespeare's forced marriage and his unhappy relations with his wife, as narrated in my book, *The Man Shakespeare,* come to view again and again in these youthful works; we meet references to it, sidelong glances at it, in the most unlikely places.

Love's Labour's Lost should now be considered, but it was so completely revised in 1597 that from my present point of view I must not handle it here except to say that neither the Princess nor any of her ladies, with the exception of Rosaline, has any existence whatever. They are one and all mere lay figures introduced to show off Shakespeare's wit. Rosaline, indeed, is alive from head to foot, but her character, being wholly due to the later revision, must be considered later.

I can dismiss *Richard II.* even more curtly; there is no woman's portrait in it worth men-

tioning; and I could pass over *Richard III.* which is a continuation of the *Third Part of Henry VI.*, just as quickly, were it not for the fact that the great scene in the first act, the wooing of Anne by Gloucester, is declared by Coleridge not to have been written by Shakespeare. Coleridge does not tell us who else could have conceived this wonderful scene. He contents himself with a bare denial, and of course the professors follow him into the ditch. Poor, weak Coleridge could not sympathize with the masterly life in the episode; the cynical audacity of the hunchback revolted him, and so he refused to ascribe the scene to his idol.

The marriage of Richard with the widow of the man he murdered is recorded by Holinshed without remark. It is one of those almost incredible facts which occur in life, but which genius alone would try to use in art or to explain. Instead of passing lightly over the difficulty or omitting all mention of it, Shakespeare seizes on it eagerly; difficulties are to him stepping-stones and vantages, and this one enables him to express some of his youthful contempt for women and some of his admiration for the triumphant brains and adroitness of a man. Transmuted into a sex-duel the incident becomes one of his greatest

scenes, an unforgettable picture. The episode delays the action; but Richard lives in it with such intensity of life; his wooing is so masterly, his cynical effrontery so astounding that we can never afterwards see him but in this fierce, raw limelight. The whole scene undoubtedly belongs to the master; no one else could have done such work.

At the very beginning, Richard shows the sinuous fierceness of a wild cat. He first orders, then threatens, then turns to Anne with obsequious flattery:

> Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst,

and on the very next page his prayer:

> Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman . . .

removes all doubt: it is all Shakespeare, and most characteristic. Richard goes on to talk of "beauty's wreck . . . thy heavenly face that set me on . . ." and pictures Edward as "framed in the prodigality of nature"—every touch pure Shakespeare. He even breaks in with the "Tush" we have already found in the characteristic Shakespearean speeches of Suffolk in the *First Part of Henry VI.* and which we shall find again in Romeo. Every word in the scene was written by Shakespeare; but marvellously as

Richard is painted in it, Anne scarcely comes to light at all. She curses at first and rails with something of the malignant verbosity of Margaret; but there is hardly more than a suggestion of individual life. When Richard tells her that he will kill himself, Anne is touched and there is just a hint of character-drawing: she says:

> I would I knew thy heart,

—just one good stroke, and no more. She turns to joy and affection too suddenly to be human; she's a weather-hen in woman's shape and that's all.

This crude painting of Anne, and Shakespeare's manifest contempt of her, give us the true explanation of the scene. His vanity had been wounded in his unhappy marriage; he had been bruised and beaten in the sordid strife with his wife and forced to fly; but he still held that the man was the master: he harped on the thought to strengthen his belief:

> She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;
> She is a woman, therefore may be won.
> *Titus Andronicus.*

and:

> She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd;
> She is a woman, therefore to be won.
> *I. Henry VI.*

and again:

> That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
> If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.
> *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

and finally Richard himself cries:

> Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?

Evidently Shakespeare means to show us by Richard's triumph how easy it is with flattering words to overcome and win a woman, even a woman maddened with grief and resentment. This is the balm which the young poet lays to his hurt pride.

Before I try and corroborate this argument from another play let me just remark that the other female figures in *Richard III.* are no better drawn than that of Anne. The Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth rave and lament as Margaret raved: there is no individual life in any of them.

The women characters in *The Taming of the Shrew* hardly deserve consideration. Neither Katharina nor Bianca is worthy to be called a woman's portrait; we only know a trait or two of them, and the widow is not even outlined. But the play itself has another and deeper in-

terest for us as throwing light on Shakespeare's life and character. In spite of the enormous success it has had on the stage and the fact that it has held its place in popular liking even to our time, it is a wretchedly poor farce, and the theme is utterly unworthy of the master. Some of the play does not read like him; but his hand is quite plainly revealed in the scenes between Katharina and Petruchio; in fact the taming of the shrew is his. One cannot but wonder why Shakespeare ever put hand to such a paltry subject. The answer comes pat to those who believe that he himself had been married unhappily to a jealous, ill-tempered scold. Marriage had been a defeat to him: he could not but see that; in this play he will comfort his pride by showing how even a shrew can be mastered; how violence can be subdued by violence. The moment one looks at the play from this point of view, its subconscious purpose becomes clear to one and its faults are all explained. When Katharina obeys her husband, Hortensio asks:

> . . . I wonder what it bodes?

and Petruchio replies:

> Marry, peace it bodes, and love and quiet life,
> And awful rule and right supremacy;
> And, to be short, what not, that's sweet and happy?

In no other way but as a salve to wounded vanity can one explain Katharina's appalling-foolish lecture to the other wives with which the play reaches its climax in Act 5, scene 2.

Fie, fie! unknit that threatening unkind brow,
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor. . . .

* * * * *

A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;
And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it. . . .

Even with the explanation in mind one is inclined to marvel how Shakespeare could seriously pen such drivel; but he goes on raving for another thirty lines:

Such duty as the subject owes the prince
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending rebel
And graceless traitor to her loving lord? . . .

* * * * *

Come, come, you froward and unable worms! . . . .

* * * * *

Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
And place your hands below your husband's foot. . . .

Any one who knows Shakespeare will find an accent of personal feeling in every line of this

teny tirade. The proof that my explanation is the right one may be carried to minute detail. As soon as Shakespeare finished writing this astonishing speech of Katharina he threw down the pen; the last ten lines of this play or most of them, appear to be written by another hand; the interest had gone out of the thing for him when Katharina was sufficiently humbled and he tossed the farce aside. It is to be hoped that he got rid in it of some of the bitterness and anger which his wife's ill-temper, jealousy, and shrewish nature had bred in him. But enough and more than enough hatred of her burned in him all through his life.

I must consider here a play which was written two or three years later because though it belongs to happy hours, to the spring-tide indeed of his success in London, it deals again with Stratford, brings again his wife sharply to memory and shows how intimately the poet's life was interwoven with his art.

King John is with some certainty dated about 1596. It was in 1596 that Shakespeare visited Stratford for the first time after an absence of eight or nine years: he was recalled probably by the news that his son Hamnet was very ill. His son's death made a great impression on Shake-

speare; it is responsible, I think, for the exquisite tenderness, beauty and pathos with which he has invested the figure of young Arthur, and also for the tragic intensity of the Queen-mother's grief.

Shakespeare took his *King John* from an old play which we still possess, *The Troublesome Reign of King John.* In it Constance is pictured as high-tempered and Arthur as a bold youth of eighteen or nineteen, but Shakespeare turned Arthur into a young boy, a girl-boy, all affection and tenderness, and at the same time hardened Constance into a "bedlam." Constance is presented to us as so bad-tempered, such a raging wordy termagant that I am forced to believe Shakespeare is again thinking of his own wife. For there is no object in making Constance a shrew; Shakespeare paints her afterwards as a mother mourning for her only son, and evidently tries to bring out all the pathos of her misery, he would have done better, therefore, not to have alienated one's sympathy from her at the beginning by making her an intolerable scold. But he had just been in Stratford, his wife had been before his eyes, and he cannot help depicting her raging violent passion. Constance is as bad-tempered as Adriana herself, and that's saying a

good deal. From the point of view of art the bad temper of Constance is much more significant. After all Adriana had some reason for her ill-humour. She was passionately in love, madly jealous, and her husband neglected her; but this Constance is a raging termagant without any such cause. We cannot, therefore, understand her ill-humour; we simply dislike her and accordingly have less sympathy with her in her affliction.

Constance comes on the stage at the beginning of the second act. At first she is becomingly grateful for the help offered to her by King Philip and Austria and counsels patience and peace. A moment later she begins to rant and rage; even her gentle son Arthur has to reprove her:

> Good my mother, peace!
> I would that I were low laid in my grave:
> I am not worth this coil that's made for me.

But nothing can stop Constance's tongue. She raves even worse than Margaret raved, till at last King John pulls her up with:

> Bedlam, have done.

She answers him:

> I have but this to say . . .

and rages on; she is indeed as Elinor calls her,

an "unadvised scold." . . . Austria reproves her, and at length King Philip cries:

> Peace, lady! pause, or be more temperate;

She appears again at the opening of the third act. She has learned from Salisbury that peace has been made between France and England, and her temper comes again to show:

> Gone to be married! gone to swear a peace!
> False blood to false blood join'd! gone to be friends!
> Shall Lewis have Blanch, and Blanch those provinces?
> It is not so; thou hast misspoke, misheard; . . .

After holding forth for a page or so in this strain she attacks Salisbury the messenger, for bringing the tidings:

> Fellow, be gone: I cannot brook thy sight:
> This news hath made thee a most ugly man.
> SAL. What other harm have I, good lady, done,
> But spoke the harm that is by others done?
> CONST. Which harm within itself so heinous is
> As it makes harmful all that speak of it.
> ARTH. I do beseech you, madam, be content. . . .

But nothing will content her. She raves on page after page, now against Philip, now against Austria, till one wonders how the princes could have stood it, and when Pandulph enters she asks characteristically for leave to curse:

> O, lawful let it be
> That I have room with Rome to curse awhile! . . .

A raging ranting cursing scold she is, and nothing more.

Suddenly the overloud note is muted: as soon as Arthur is taken prisoner she jumps to the conclusion that he is dead; long before even the famous scene between Hubert and Arthur takes place, she grieves for her child as lost. The agony of her grief is so realized that it carries us all away with it, and turns the furious scold into one of the great tragic figures of our literature.

At first she does not strike the true note. When Philip counsels patience and comfort she raves:

> No, I defy all counsel, all redress,
> But that which ends all counsel, true redress,
> Death, death; O amiable, lovely death!
> Thou odoriferous stench! sound rottenness!
> Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
> Thou hate and terror to prosperity. . . .

and so on, plainly the poet talking and not yet in the spirit of the part. But as soon as Constance thinks of her son, her voice falls to mournful sadness, and takes on the very accent of regret:

> . . . I was Geffrey's wife;
> Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost:
> I am not mad: I would to heaven I were!

> For then, 'tis like I should forget myself:
> O, if I could, what grief should I forget!
> Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
> And thou shalt be canónized, cardinal;
> * * * * *
> too well, too well I feel
> The different plague of each calamity.

King Philip prays her to bind up her hair, and she goes off again:

> Yes, that I will; and wherefore will I do it?
> I tore them from their bonds and cried aloud
> " O that these hands could so redeem my son,
> As they have given these hairs their liberty!"
> But now I envy at their liberty,
> And will again commit them to their bonds,
> Because my poor child is a prisoner. . . .

There is distinct individuality now in the scolding verbosity, which characterizes even her grief. But it is when she again talks of the child that she touches the heart:

> There was not such a gracious creature born.
> But now will canker sorrow eat my bud
> And chase the native beauty from his cheek
> And he will look as hollow as a ghost
> As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
> And so he'll die; and, rising so again,
> When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
> I shall not know him: therefore never, never
> Must I behold my pretty Arthur more. . . .

This seems to me Shakespeare's own emotion. The wonderful first line:

There was not such a *gracious* creature born

is unmistakable, and he will give us that "gracious" again.

When the mother-grief of Constance swings higher still and reaches the soul of sorrow, to me it is again Shakespeare speaking, Shakespeare lamenting his own loss, at least for the first six lines:

> Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
> Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
> Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
> Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
> Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;
> Then, have I reason to be fond of grief?
> Fare you well: had you such a loss as I
> I could give better comfort than you do.
> I will not keep this form upon my head,
> When there is such disorder in my wit.
> O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!
> My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!
> My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!

The last seven lines are poor stuff, and the last four words out of place, intolerable: but the first lines are all perfect till the poet tries to think himself into the character of Constance. For this Constance lives in a frenzy as the poet takes care to tell us that she dies in a frenzy too. For years his furious scolding wife simply obsessed Shakespeare; but the intense emotion which

throbs through these pages is Shakespeare's own emotion—his grief, his agony of bereavement—speaking through the scolding mask. How lovable his young boy must have been to have wrung such a phrase from him:

> There was not such a gracious creature born.

The sorrow of young Hamnet's loss lived with gentle Shakespeare for the rest of his life. Fourteen or fifteen years later we find it again in *The Winter's Tale* when he describes young Mamillius, who charms every one by telling fairy stories with childish grace and dies through "thoughts too high for one so tender."

I cannot regard any of the other women characters in *King John* as more than historical lay figures: Elinor is as wooden as she can be, and Blanch is no better.

My readers will notice that all through the piece I take part with Shakespeare against his wife. For a dozen reasons I accept his view that she was a shrew of the worst; one may here suffice. From Jonson and Chettle we know that Shakespeare was very gentle and sweet-tempered, justified indeed in portraying himself as he allows the servant in *The Comedy of Errors* to portray him as the reverse of "choleric."

This mildness of Shakespeare is attested by other facts. He was criticized again and again by surly Jonson, for instance, now with reason, and now without; yet remained a friend of Jonson's to the end. He preached forgiveness, too, as a duty all through his life, and yet he nursed his dislike of his wife to the grave and beyond it, as I have shown in *The Man Shakespeare*. She was the one person whom he could never forgive. I am convinced that the Xanthippe of Socrates was not a more violent termagant than Anne Hathaway.

CHAPTER III

THE SALVE TO VANITY: HOW WOMEN WOO!—THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA: ALL'S WELL

IN the first two chapters I have said enough, I think, about Shakespeare's earliest attempts at picturing women. No great master has ever done worse. In spite of his rich sensual endowment, and his incomparable gift of speech, his first sketches were as bad as bad could be. To say nothing of the atrocious Joan of Arc, it is difficult to understand how a great man at twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age could have been content with a mere fiend like Tamora or a typical lay figure like Queen Margaret, and the talkative princess and her maidens in *Love's Labour's Lost,* and the innumerable duchesses and great ladies of the early historical plays are all just as wooden, mere marionettes.

The portrait of his jealous, scolding wife as Adriana is the first sketch which has any individual life in it. His unhappy marriage over-

shadows much of his early work. We have traced it in Suffolk's wooing of Margaret in the *First Part of King Henry VI.;* it dominates the whole of *The Comedy of Errors;* it inspires the great scene between the hunchback and Anne in *Richard III.;* it supplies the theme of *The Taming of the Shrew* and explains the otherwise inexplicable tirade in that play against those wives who are not the mere slavish instruments of their husbands' pleasure.

Even the servility of Katharina and the submission of Anne did not satisfy Shakespeare. He will now show us in play after play how girls run after men. I cannot help thinking that the taming of women and the triumphing over them on the one hand and these pictures of girl after girl pursuing the hero, with dog-like devotion on the other were not only a balm to his wounded vanity, but were also probably a result of young Shakespeare's conquests of women in those early years in London.

His success in every field had been astounding. He had come to the Bankside at twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, an unknown country lad, and in five or six years he had made himself the first poet of his time, and the master of the theatre. He was not only sensuous, good-

looking, and sweet-mannered, but he had about him the halo of genius; he had a good deal of money, too, and could invite ladies to the theatre to see his plays. Love must have been offered to him on every side, and the little soreness of the ancient wound which still twitched in him, made him eager to dwell on his triumphs, and accordingly he pictures them for us in the *Midsummer Night's Dream,* in the first sketch of *All's Well that Ends Well,* and in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.* In all these plays the heroes are courted and pursued by the heroines.

This group of plays shows a considerable growth in Shakespeare's knowledge of his art. His life with his wife had humiliated and enraged him: but it had no doubt opened his eyes and taught him that all women were not like the creatures of his imagination. The early happy days in London, when he began to exercise his craft successfully and make his way to the front, were even richer in experiences. He had spent laborious days bettering old plays of Greene and others; had written thousands of passionate verses, and above all had worked at one table with Marlowe over *Henry VI.:* he had fleeted wild nights with Bardolph and Pistol and Falstaff at Dame Quickly's; had met the lords of

life and masters of England with Southampton and Essex, and their charming easy-mannered friends, and was now on the crest of the seventh wave of success. The merry girls o' the Bankside were proud of a smile from him: rich citizens' dames were fluttered by his approach: even high court ladies had a gracious greeting for the handsome young poet. Sunny happy days ripen the fruit; but it takes a storm to shake it down. It was well for Shakespeare and for us that his conceit and contentment came to a fall.

Late in 1596 or early in 1597 he met for the first time the woman who was to change the world for him. We can tell in his works the very moment he saw her. As soon as he met her he tried to paint her and at once began to abandon the lay figures which he had hitherto mistaken for heroines. From this time on his spiritual growth is astounding—a continuous flame-like effort reaching up from height to height. There is nothing in literature so instructive and few things so interesting as the extraordinary growth and development of Shakespeare's soul in the madding fever of passion.

The *Midsummer Night's Dream* I imagine dates from 1594; I like to think of it as written when Shakespeare was just thirty years of age.

The play has a romantic individuality of its own. It is a charming fairy tale and the hand of the dramatist begins to show itself in the portraits of the women. At first it is true they are not differentiated as they are later: in the early scenes Hermia might be Helena, and Helena, Hermia; for they are both desperately in love, and that is about all we know of them. Hermia is happy in Lysander's affection, while Helena grieves because Demetrius scorns her; but these are differences of circumstance and not of character. Hermia begins to talk of her modesty and virginity, as all Shakespeare's girl heroines are inclined to talk, in contempt of probability; Helena, too, tells Demetrius of Hermia's flight with Lysander and so brings about a meeting between the man she loves and her rival in defiance of human nature; in all this there is no hint of character-drawing.

But when Hermia and Helena quarrel in the second scene of the third act they are for the moment clearly differenced, and curiously enough Shakespeare tries to distinguish between the two girls by contrasting their figures and tempers. Hermia is shown to us as small, vehement, and plucky, whilst Helena is tall, gentle, and faint-hearted:

HEL. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her. . . .

A little later she again recurs to this difference and emphasizes the same trait:

HEL. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school,
But though she be but little, she is fierce.

This is about the only touch of character-drawing that can be found in the play. It is, however, sufficient for its purpose; the contrasted sketches are in perfect keeping with the charming foolery, and show us besides that Shakespeare is beginning to realize the necessity of painting women as individual beings. For a moment these two love-laden girls, Helena and Hermia, live for us—quarrelling, courting, kissing—and then we lose sight of them down some green forest glade; for Titania takes the eye as she passes with her cowslip-pensioners in their golden coats, and we strain to catch a glimpse of Puck in the happy rout, while Bottom, the prince of mummers, roars like a lion, and the fairies flit

across the moonlit spaces, hanging the flowers with pearls of dew.

Like the *Midsummer Night's Dream, The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is distinguished by its lovelorn maidens and their unblushing pursuit of the men they have chosen. The professors say it was written a little before the *Midsummer Night's Dream,* but I can't believe it. Professor Herford says, "striking similarities of phrase and some in situation connect the play with the *Midsummer Night's Dream,* as also with *Romeo and Juliet.*" So far as the character-drawing of the women is concerned *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is far more closely connected, as we shall see, with *The Merchant of Venice.* The professor goes on to assert that though "far superior in dramatic structure to *Love's Labour's Lost,* it certainly bears a fainter mark of Shakespeare's hand." This is merely echoed nonsense. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is pure Shakespeare from start to finish; young Shakespeare at his most characteristic. I should put the play later than the *Midsummer Night's Dream,* and the latter part of the last act appears to have been revised as late as 1598.

In its present form it is a far maturer work than the *Midsummer Night's Dream,* at least in

characterization. The construction is puerile in both, but no sure inference as to the date of composition can be drawn from this fact: for Shakespeare was always careless of construction and inexpert in what one might call the carpentry-work of the stage. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* the construction is as amateurish as that of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Julia is in love with Proteus and Sylvia with Valentine, just as Hermia was in love with Lysander, and Helena with Demetrius. The greatest difficulty in this play is to reconcile the childish construction with the maturity of the heroine's characterization, for whereas Helena and Hermia at first are mere stage names, and are never profoundly studied, Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is painted with astonishing realism and decision and lives for us as soon as she appears. Let us study the portrait with all care for in this Julia we have probably the first sketch (taken from a distance) of the woman who was the love of Shakespeare's life. The proofs of all this will appear later; here one must be content to remark the extraordinary, immeasurable improvement in character-drawing.

In the second scene of the first act Julia comes upon the stage and talks to her maid Lucetta,

just as Portia and Nerissa a little later talk about Portia's lovers. Julia wishes to know her maid's opinion as to which is the worthiest of the gentlemen:

> That every day with parle encounter me. . . .

Then as they are mentioned one by one she tells them off, till Proteus is named, when she denies not only her love, but her interest in him, evidently with the object of getting Lucetta to assure her of his love and praise him:

> Jul. Why he, of all the rest, hath never moved me.
> Luc. Yet he, of all the rest, I think, best loves ye.
> Jul. His little speaking shows his love but small.
> Luc. Fire that's closest kept burns most of all. . . .

Shakespeare wishes to persuade his lady that his tongue-tied timidity is the best proof of sincerity; though he surely was never timid with a girl of his own rank. Then comes a touch which we have already noticed as the only realistic touch in the character of Anne in *Richard III.*: Shakespeare has to repeat his little "finds" of character-drawing, because as yet he has not many at his command:

> Jul. I would I knew his mind. . . .

Anne says to Gloucester;

> I would I knew thy heart. . . .

Julia then refuses to read the letter of Proteus; swears, too, by her "modesty," and behaves as the conventional Shakespearean girl. But no sooner does the maid take her at her word and go away than this Julia changes her tune:

> Jul. And yet I would I had o'erlooked the letter;
> It were a shame to call her back again
> And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.
> What a fool is she, that knows I am a maid,
> And would not force the letter to my view!
>
> * * * * *
>
> My penance is to call Lucetta back
> And ask remission for my folly past.
> What ho! Lucetta!

With such excellent touches of impatient nature Julia lives for us, as none of Shakespeare's heroines has yet lived, and the dramatist displays considerable ingenuity in inventing scenes in which she may discover new traits of her character. He is evidently studying this girl with love's fine wit. When Lucetta comes back Julia asks her about the dinner, and not about the letter, and when after beating about the bush she at length gets the letter, she tears it up and throws the pieces aside, girlishly anxious not to betray her passion to her maid. As soon as Lucetta goes out of the room Julia picks up the letter, devours it at a glance, kisses each several piece of paper

for amends, and with a conceit which is so natural and pretty that it excuses the suggestiveness, she folds the bits of paper so that the words "poor forlorn Proteus . . . passionate Proteus" may lie on "sweet Julia:"

> Thus will I fold them one upon another:
> Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

There is a good deal of passionate human nature in this Julia, who is twin-sister to the immortal Juliet, and who also reminds me of Portia in a dozen traits.

When her lover Proteus goes to court, Julia determines to follow him, and now she confesses herself to her maid, as Portia will confess her love for Bassanio to Nerissa. Julia finds a beautiful phrase for her passion:

> Didst thou but know the inly touch of love. . . .

That "inly" is to me delightful.

Julia has to be dressed up as a man, of course, as Portia too will have to masquerade as a man, and Shakespeare pictures this first dressing up with more detail. Lucetta says she must cut off her hair: Julia will not allow this; she will tie it up in "true-love knots." Then she must wear breeches. The maid here is smutty; but Julia pulls her up at once.

JUL. Lucetta, as thou lovest me, let me have
What thou thinkest meet and is most mannerly.

Just in the same way Portia pulls up Gratiano. The whole picture is astonishing, and at least as elaborate as the portrait of Portia, though not thrown on the paper with the same *brio,* the same ease of triumphant mastery.

In the fourth scene of the fourth act, when Julia finds out that her Proteus is in love with Sylvia, she again finds the right word:

'Tis pity love should be so contrary;

she sighs, and immediately contrasts her feelings with those of Proteus, and so paints herself again for us:

Because he loves her, he despiseth me;
Because I love him, I must pity him.

Then follows an astonishing scene when the two rivals, Julia and Sylvia meet. Sylvia asks Julia about Julia:

Is she not passing fair?

and Julia answers:

She hath been fairer, madam, than she is:
When she did think my master loved her well,
She, in my judgment, was as fair as you. . . .
. . . . . .

SIL. How tall was she?
JUL. About my stature; . . . .

When Sylvia goes away, Julia sums her up in soliloquy:

A virtuous gentlewoman, mild and beautiful!
I hope my master's suit will be but cold,
Since she respects my mistress' love so much. . . .

And Julia paints herself at the same time:

If I had such a tire, this face of mine
Were full as lovely as is this of hers:
And yet the painter flatter'd her a little,
Unless I flatter with myself too much.
Her hair is auburn, mine is perfect yellow;
If that be all the difference in his love,
I'll get me such a colour'd periwig.
Her eyes are grey as glass, and so are mine:
Ay, but her forehead's low, and mine's as high.
. . . . . .

Then she takes up her rival's picture and talks to it, as none of Shakespeare's heroines has talked yet, quite naturally:

. . . . . .
I'll use thee kindly for thy mistress' sake,
That used me so; or else, by Jove I vow
I should have scratch'd out your unseeing eyes,
To make my master out of love with thee! . . .

The touch of temper here is excellent. Julia's character is kept up, even when she is in her boy's dress in the last act, and in spite of the revision:

she is both high-spirited and witty: she says to her lover:

Be thou ashamed that I have took upon me
Such an immodest raiment, if shame live
In a disguise of love;
It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,
Women to change their shapes than men their minds. . . .

This Julia lives for us from beginning to end of the play—a very careful full-length portrait which recalls that of Portia again and again, so that I am fain to believe that the same woman sat for both pictures. The full significance of this similarity will have to be brought out when I handle Portia. Here I can do nothing but draw attention to it, and to the fact that Julia is Shakespeare's first achievement in this field: his first portrait of a woman which has any individual life. The portrait belongs, I think, to the later revision unless indeed the whole play is dated much later than it has ever been dated, and later than the first scenes appear to justify.

The painting of Julia is altogether superior to the rest of the play except the last scene, which must also be due entirely to the later revision. Sylvia, on the other hand, is not individualized at all: she is modest, mild, lovely, faithful, and nothing more.

The Salve to Vanity: How Women Woo!

We now come to a very peculiar play, *All's Well that Ends Well.* It is the latest of the plays in which the heroine follows the hero with her love, and at length wins him, unless indeed we include *Twelfth Night* as another variant on the same theme, which I am not inclined to do. Like *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, All's Well* is an early play which has been greatly revised, but unlike *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* the revision has not been successful, partly I imagine because it is not so thorough-going; partly because it is a much later work than the early sketch and so the discrepancies jar into contrasts. When Shakespeare revised Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* he made her all of a piece, he had the model before him: but when he revised Helena in *All's Well* he left much of the early sketch with its silly conceits, affected word-wit and rhymed letters, and these peculiarities not only swear at the later touches, but render the portrait utterly unrecognizable. For these and other reasons which will appear later I prefer to put off the criticism of *All's Well* till I can consider the revision in its proper place. But in the first sketch, indeed in the revision, too, Helena is presented as pursuing Bertram with as shameless a persistency as is shown by any of

Mr. Bernard Shaw's heroines. In Shakespeare's case at least this procedure can safely be regarded as a salve to wounded vanity.

In all that we have as yet read of Shakespeare there is to me nothing superhuman, nothing of that ineffable quality which makes his name sacred beyond all other names. Julia stands out as very honest, careful work; the courtship of Richard is surprising; Titania and Bottom delightful; the grief of Constance unforgettable; young Arthur beautiful exceedingly; but these are all separate scenes and personages, and perhaps none of them is beyond the reach of some other poet; though the width of range is already Shakespeare's alone. Now in *Romeo and Juliet* for the first time we are about to tread the primrose way into Shakespeare's kingdom.

CHAPTER IV

IDEALISTIC STUDIES OF HIS LOVE:—JULIET: PORTIA: BEATRICE: ROSALIND: VIOLA

I ALWAYS think of *Romeo and Juliet* as of the so-called *Night Watch* of Rembrandt; it is full of minor faults all redeemed by divine virtues. Shakespeare, like Rembrandt, has done other and greater things; but he has never done anything more delightful of its kind, nothing of a more intimate and communicable charm.

After reading *Romeo and Juliet* through for the hundredth time, I feel inclined to say that the picture of Juliet in it, is finer than any woman's portrait ever painted by any other poet. The *Antigone* of Sophocles has been inordinately praised. But after all, what do we know of Antigone? that she was high-minded and courageous; that she will bury her brother even though her life pays the penalty, that she faced the angry Creon and death with the same marble resolve. But what else do we know of her? She is a mere stony outline when looked at side by

side with this living, breathing, palpitating Juliet. Even the Gretchen of Goethe is a simple sketch in comparison. Gretchen is loving, yes, and superstitious; credulous and easily moved by those she likes; but love is all her character; its doubt, her pathos; its loss, her despair. Were it not for the exquisite poetry with which Goethe has clothed her (and higher poetry is not to be found in literature), Gretchen would hardly deserve her fame, so simple is she, so insignificant. But this Juliet is a living being, infinitely more complex and intelligent, infinitely more interesting therefore than Gretchen or Francesca.

And the Nurse, the feminine counterpart of Falstaff, what shall be said of the ever famous Nurse?* No play outside Shakespeare can boast of four such characters as Romeo and Juliet, Mercutio and the Nurse. I will not go through the play, scene by scene, and dissect Juliet as I have dissected Julia, and as I am about to dissect Portia and some other fascinating heroines; for the charm of Juliet does not lie in her character, but in the fact that her character, clear though its outlines are and finely modelled

* I look upon Dame Quickly as hardly more than an elaborate copy of the Nurse and Doll Tearsheet is only venality incarnate in a telling name. There is no attempt to paint the soul of either woman.

as it is, is fused so to speak, in the furnace of a first passion. Let us now see how Shakespeare came to write this astonishing masterpiece.

The prose version of the story was published by the Italian novelist, Bandello, in 1554. Already in this narrative we have Romeo's mentor, Benvolio, who would throw the cold water of reason on passion, and the Nurse; the chief incidents, too, are here; the love at first sight, the rope-ladder and Juliet's vision of the horrors of the vault.

This story was turned into English verse by Arthur Brooke in 1562; a prose translation appeared in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* in 1567. Shakespeare, we are told, was acquainted with both these versions; but the poem of Brooke was virtually the sole source of his work. Brooke had bettered Bandello; he had vivified the Italian story by adding a series of homely English realistic traits to the chief characters: for example, he turned the poison-seller into the desperate Apothecary: in his poem, too, Romeo on hearing of his banishment throws himself on the ground and tears his hair: more important still, Brooke gives a vigorous realistic picture of the Nurse, in especial he notes her garrulity about Juliet's childhood; her acceptance of Romeo's gold and

her prompt desertion of his cause when he is banished: that is, the Nurse lives in Brooke's poem just as Hotspur lived in English history and tradition, and just as the Bastard lived in *The Troublesome Reign.* Shakespeare annexed the realistic traits, heightened their effect and shed over them the magic of his divinely simple poetry. But the realistic touches were given to him and not invented by him—all of which bears out and confirms my view of his idealistic poetic temperament. Mercutio, on the other hand, is all his own; a side or mood of himself indeed; blood-brother to the quick, witty Biron of *Love's Labour's Lost* and to the talkative Gratiano of *The Merchant of Venice.*

But nothing can take our eyes away from Juliet: she holds the centre of the picture, and her figure is more important than Romeo's. In the Italian version of the story she was eighteen years of age, but Brooke made her sixteen, and Shakespeare with his terrible passionate sensuality reduced this sixteen to fourteen. Those who deny his extravagant sensuality will hardly be able to deny that the gravest fault, perhaps indeed, the only grave fault in his character-drawing of Juliet is that he makes her talk far more sensually than a maiden talks:

> Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen.
> Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
> By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,
> It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
> Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
> And learn me how to lose a winning match,
> Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods. . . .

The words sin against human nature in their sensuality and boldness. Girls hardly ever say as much as they think or feel; but this Juliet is as outspoken as a young man:

> O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
> But not possess'd it, and, though I am sold,
> Not yet enjoy'd: so tedious is this day
> As is the night before some festival. . . .

This passionate abandonment, however, adds intensity to the love-song and deepens the effect of its terror and tragedy. In everything else Juliet is natural enough for the purpose of the poem.

Strange to say, she is not so carefully individualized as Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* though she lives for us more intensely by reason of her passion. The same model served for both pictures; there is no trait in Juliet which is not marked in Julia; but Shakespeare was not so intent on giving us the portrait of a living girl in Juliet as in painting once for all the lovely, passionate girl of his ideal.

But how did he get this quality into the picture?—this throbbing passion, this grace, this tenderness, this pride even; for Juliet is proud in her loyalty; she condemns the Nurse pitilessly as soon as the Nurse is false to Romeo. Her contemptuous impatience of life, too, when she is separated from the man she loves, redeems to a certain extent her sensuality. I cannot help thinking that Shakespeare got the fascination of this play from the happy chance that just before he wrote it he met the woman who was destined to be the passion of his life. I am compelled to call her Mary Fitton, though any other name of a high-born woman would suit me as well. All probabilities seem to be in favour of the assumption that the one star of his idolatry, his "dark lady" of the Sonnets was Mary Fitton, who came to be maid-of-honour to Queen Elizabeth as a girl of sixteen in 1596.* She no doubt visited the theatre; it is certain she knew Kemp, the clown of Shakespeare's company; for he ventured to dedicate a book to her somewhat familiarly. Shakespeare had probably seen her in 1596 and fallen in love with her at first sight:

* For proofs of this, one should consult Mr. Tyler's work on the *Sonnets* and for confirmation my book *The Man Shakespeare.*

in 1597 he knew her well. The enchantment she cast upon him brought with it an entirely new understanding of womanhood. He studied her at first from a distance; but with love's insight and delight. The bare impression of her gave life to his sketch of Julia; he painted her again for us as Portia, this time superbly, but still from the outside, the heart of her he did not know. What was it like? At first, as we shall soon see, she seemed to him careless, proud; for she stood aloof and paid little attention to him. We have her photograph as Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet.* But the poet could not help believing that her heart was all he desired, perfect like her body, and he painted her heart for us as he imagined it, in tender, proud, passionate Juliet, a child in innocent boldness, a woman in devoted tenderness, and all her qualities are quickened by youth's impatience and love's delight, and death himself has helped to make her immortal; for us as for Romeo:

> . . . beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson in her lips and in her cheeks.

Shakespeare even found it possible to make her passion virtuous:

> . . . trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true,
> Than those that have more cunning to be strange. . . .

and as if this were not enough he gets the very words that paint the trembling heart of the girl forever:

> O God, I have an ill-divining soul!

Thanks to his passion for Mary Fitton, and to the glamour of his lyric poetry, the mere name of Juliet has already borne for a dozen generations of men the imperishable significance, the freshness and the honeyed sweetness of first love.

It now remains for me to show Juliet's relations to Shakespeare's mistress. The outward presentment of Mary Fitton, the bodily image of her, is not given us in Juliet but in Rosaline.

The first mention of Rosaline is in the first act of *Romeo and Juliet,* where Romeo talks to Benvolio of his love. Here is the passage:

> . . . she'll not be hit
> With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's wit;
> And in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,
> From love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.
> She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
> Not bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
> Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold;
> O, she is rich in beauty, only poor
> That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

The last couplet reminds one both of *Venus and Adonis* and the early sonnets. I find every

word of this passage characteristic. It appears from it that his love, who is likened to the proud huntress Diana, torments Shakespeare-Romeo with cold indifference. "She'll not be hit with Cupid's arrow," he says; "she hath foresworn to love"; but her aloofness, we learn, has limits:

> She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,
> To merit bliss by making me despair. . . .

In the next talk with Benvolio which occurs a scene or two later we get a little more information. Benvolio says:

> At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
> Sups the fair Rosaline whom thou so lovest,
> With all the admired beauties of Verona:
> Go thither; and, with unattainted eye,
> Compare her face with some that I shall show,
> And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

In this "crow" we have the first allusion to Mary Fitton's black hair and eyes. Benvolio says a little later:

> Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by . . .

But it is when Mercutio meets Romeo that we get Rosaline's picture, a snapshot, so to speak:

> I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
> By her high forehead, and her scarlet lip,
> By her fine foot, straight leg . . .

and so forth. Mercutio completed this first sketch a little later:

> Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,
> Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

and again:

> Alas poor Romeo! he is already dead; stabbed
> With a white wench's black eye. . . .

We get nothing more in this play, but as I have shown elsewhere, this photograph is in itself astonishing. Shakespeare indulges very rarely in this physical portraiture of women or men. We have a phrase or two about Falstaff's appearance, a vague word or two about Hamlet's; just a word about Julia's yellow hair and "high" forehead, but nothing at all as complete as this snapshot of Shakespeare's "dark lady" with her high forehead, scarlet lips, fine feet, whitely complexion and black eyes. Yet Rosaline, who is pictured with this extraordinary particularity, has nothing to do with the play, never appears in fact upon the stage, and is described by secondary characters. The explanation of these strange facts is that we have here the first realistic portrait of Shakespeare's mistress, Mary Fitton.

But how, one will ask, did he leave his love

Rosaline with a mere passing mention or so to paint Juliet? It seems to me evident that he pictured the outward presentment of Mistress Fitton as Rosaline, but when he wrote *Romeo and Juliet* he only knew her slightly, and could still persuade himself that a loving, tender soul dwelt in her fair body. He gave his Juliet the spirit qualities he believed existed in Mary Fitton. In no other way can I explain Juliet's extravagant sensuality, which we noticed too in Julia and which from this time on is a quality marked in nearly all Shakespeare's heroines. Early in their acquaintance he noticed the extraordinary sensuality in Mary Fitton and was attracted by it as we see from Juliet, imagining, no doubt, that it could be held to loyalty for one person. If this guess of mine is correct, it will explain Juliet's unbridled sensualism, which, as we shall soon see, was allied with faithlessness in Mary Fitton, as indeed too often happens. If we don't accept this conjecture we shall find it difficult to explain the fact that Shakespeare has not given this excessive sensuality to any other of his earlier creations.

But the evidence of all this which is still to be set forth is a thousand times more convincing than any inferences that can be drawn from the

realistic picture of Rosaline or from the practical identity of the two idealistic portraits of the same woman in Julia and Juliet. All Shakespeare's works from the time he was thirty-two or three to the day of his death bear the marks of his passion for his dark mistress. People seem to think that in saying this I am making his life extraordinarily simple; but the life of the emotions which is the heart of life to a poet, is always very simple—a little vanity, a little striving, a little love and joy and jealousy—what more is there in life for any of us?

Shakespeare pictures his love, Rosaline, for us as very proud and chastely indifferent, and photographs her, so to speak, at the same time with high forehead, white skin, black hair and black eyes.

At the very outset he notices her cold aloofness, perhaps due to pride, perhaps to cunning; a little later, her wantonness strikes him, and at once he gives us two sorts of portraits of her. At first, when he is happy, we have idealistic portraits such as Julia, Juliet, Portia, Beatrice and Rosalind; when her lightness wounds him and makes him jealous, we have realistic true portraits, such as the snapshot of Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet,* and the superb Rosaline again in

Love's Labour's Lost. But the same model serves always; for the idealistic pictures he has only to leave out his mistress' infidelity and lechery, and make her tender, true, and loving; for the realistic portrait he has only to recall her sensual vagrancy and we have the hard-hearted Rosaline of *Romeo and Juliet* and the more cruel, though far completer portrait of the same Rosaline again in *Love's Labour's Lost;* but these are all manifestly pictures of one and the same woman.

Thinking chiefly of sequence in time I should perhaps first study the Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost* and then go on to Portia, Beatrice, Rosalind and Viola; but the sequence in passion induces me to put the intenser and more detailed portrait later.

First of all then let us get this Portia into our minds, for this was how Mary Fitton looked to Shakespeare in the early days of their acquaintance, or he would hardly have painted a finer *replica* of Julia.

Portia is at once a brilliant and careful study, so careful indeed that it shows the poet was still not quite sure of his own skill in imaginative portraiture, but reproduced every gesture and word of his model. Mistress Fitton had evidently come to the theatre, and he had met her; he had

watched her laughing and talking condescendingly to Kemp the clown or jesting wittily with some of the young noblemen. Her pride, and her familiar ways; her generosity, her high spirits and temper were graven on his heart. He would naturally believe, or at least try to persuade himself that she was also tender and true. And this is what he does.

In all these attempts of mine to show how the dramatic author works and how in the case of women especially he gives us the impression of having created half a dozen different characters, whereas in reality he has been using variously a few different features of the same person, half my difficulty comes from the fact that the majority of readers and nearly all my critics have no understanding whatever of the creative gift. They are blinded by names. Call a man Macbeth and make him commit murder after murder, he is to them a cruel, ambitious murderer: call the same person Hamlet, and he is a humane, self-questioning, melancholy student-prince: they do not want to recognize in the Macbeth they detest, the Hamlet they admire and love; though the two are clearly one and the same person.

It must be admitted, also, that the actor always differentiates characters rather by what

they do than by what they say: the positions and acts—the externals—of the characters are to the mummer all important, not what they say and what they are. And the public are often deluded into accepting the personality of the actor or actress for that of the character he or she is supposed to assume.

But in spite of these deceptive circumstances it should be possible for any good reader to convince himself that Portia and Julia and Juliet are one and the same character. Portia is the most complex of the three: she is a later study: Shakespeare grows continually in knowledge of his model. Yet if one put down all Portia's traits there would only be some dozen or so in all. I have already shown that in two features she is Julia: both Portia and Julia talk to their maids about their suitors and plainly show who is the man of their choice. Julia reproves her maid for speaking grossly, and Portia reproves Gratiano for the same reason: now to these traits let us add others. Both are desperately in love and both are quick to jealousy; both love music; both, too, are generous in every sense of the word, and above all both are good—heart-good and kind. The trait is more marked in Portia; she declares she has never repented of a good deed—and

Shakespeare uses his divine poetic gift to make this goodness of Portia charming to us. The candle shines in the dark, she says:

> Like a good deed in a naughty world.

But all these traits of Portia are also noted in Julia. Julia even recognizes her rival's good qualities (not by any means an ordinary feminine trait) and does her faithless lover's service. How, then, do the two differ? Not one quality is given to Portia which would be out of character if given to Julia. But there ought to be half a dozen irreconcilable distinctions before we talk of difference of character. The only difference I can think of is that Portia at first talks suggestively to her maid, while Julia will not allow the maid to talk suggestively to her. As Shakespeare got to know his model, he found her bolder of speech than he had thought seemly. But this is only a difference of his knowledge and not a difference in the nature of the girls, for curiously enough Julia shows more sensuality than even Portia. Of course I am alluding to the scene in which after reading the letter, she puts the name of Proteus, on the name of Julia, and tells them to

> . . . kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

Clearly these two girls are one and the same person, or rather as I have said, the one girl has been the model for both pictures, of which Portia is the better and later portrait.

I may also just note here that Portia has some traits which are used again in the painting of Helena in *All's Well:* she has also traits in common with the Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost.*

A good adversary might urge that I have still not convinced him. Shakespeare's love, Rosaline, he might say, like the "dark lady" of the sonnets has a white skin and black hair and black eyes; whereas this Julia describes herself as having yellow hair and grey-blue eyes: and Portia also has golden hair. How can these differences be explained? Every dramatic writer knows that such physical differences count for less than similarity of temperament. As Leonardo da Vinci says: "For the form we go to Nature and use observation, for the soul we look into our own hearts." Shakespeare may not have wished at first to be detected in painting his love over and over again in every drama. Accordingly, while he describes her nature in Julia and Portia and idealizes her, he gives her now yellow hair and grey-blue eyes, and now golden hair instead of black. But when he has to show what she

is and how she speaks, he cannot help betraying himself by painting continually the woman he loves.

Such identity of character in various heroines is only to be explained by ignorance or by a passionate obsession. Everyone has seen a pair of sisters who are very much alike. So long as you don't know them, you take them for twins, but as soon as you know them, you begin to wonder at your former blindness; they differ in a hundred ways. In a short time you see that they are not even like each other. With a little trouble you could enumerate a hundred differences of face and form, and the same observation holds true in stronger measure with regard to the mind. It is only ignorance that sees identity. No two leaves of an oak tree are alike, much less two sister minds: looked at intently they differ in every respect. Let's be honest with ourselves. Portia even is a very rudimentary and simple study. She is not to be compared for complexity with Charles Reade's Margaret. Portia's beauty and magic are in Shakespeare's poetry, and not in his revelation of her character. What traits she does possess are those of Julia and Juliet.

The important thing to remember is that notwithstanding the success of the picture Shakespeare has not given us in Portia the heart of his

mistress: trait after trait he marks but no faults; the figure casts no shadow and is therefore in so far unreal. We never know Portia as we know, for instance, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet.* The truth, of course, is that Portia is only half the woman; Mary Fitton's lecherous, change-loving temperament which is the natural complement of Portia's passionate sensuality and love of suggestive talk is not only ignored, but is transmuted into tender loyalty and devotion. Portia's humility, too, and her desire to be married are merely usual maiden qualities, and not borrowed from Mistress Fitton, consequently the soul-painting is not only superficial, but a little unsteady and unsatisfactory.

When Shakespeare next uses this model in Beatrice* he has become familiar with it and gets closer to it and to life; he gives Beatrice fewer traits than he accumulated in Portia, but the art is more masterly, the deep-graven features count doubly, and Beatrice—thanks at first to her scornful, teasing self-assurance and later to her passionate defence of Hero, her bitter condemnation of Claudio, and the high, imperious spirit she shows to Benedick ("Kill Claudio!" she

* Coleridge noticed that Beatrice and Julia were very much alike.

cries to him)—lives for us more clearly, more vitally than Portia herself. Beatrice has been given Mary Fitton's desperate, passionate temper ("I would eat his heart in the market-place," is her word) and Mary Fitton's proud self-centredness instead of Portia's humility and cheap desire to be married, and the realistic, natural traits taken from the great model, lend pulsing blood to Benedick's mistress: she is a finer, truer picture of Mary Fitton than Juliet or Portia.

Beatrice is a far better portrait even than Rosalind. As Shakespeare created Beatrice with Portia's wit and vivacity adding deep shadows of extravagant pride and temper, so he created Rosalind with Portia's love and tenderness adding merely touches of archness, but the too great sweet is inclined to cloy. How hard put to it Shakespeare is to differentiate between his heroines, or even to find an individual trait (not borrowed from his mistress) for any one of them, can be seen in this Rosalind. She is very loving, generous, and impatient as are Julia, Juliet and Portia. It is the same nature without the suggestive speech, though Rosalind, too, thinks that "time trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized."

Her famous talk of love in the third act betrays Shakespeare's method. In *Much Ado* he makes Benedick talk of love with Don Pedro, who says that he will see him look pale with love.

Benedick answers:

With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-monger's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.

Rosalind says:

Love is merely a madness, and I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.

That is, Shakespeare gives his own thought now to Benedick, now to Rosalind. But the words that live and throb and burn for us in his women characters are always derived from his "dark lady," his own passion coming to utterance again and again. For instance, Rosalind reproves Phebe, Phebe who scorns Silvius—and this is the way she does it. Every word lives, because every word is really addressed by Shakespeare to his scornful mistress:

. . . What though you have no beauty,—
As, by my faith, I see no more in you,
Than without candle may go dark to bed—
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless? . . . .

"Proud and pitiless" is appropriate when addressed to the scornful maid-of-honour, the "dark lady" of the sonnets; but verges on the ridiculous when used to the shepherdess. Then, too, we have the portrait of the maid-of-honour; for Rosalind goes on:

'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,
That can entame my spirits to your worship. . . .

Surely this is Rosaline again whom Mercutio spoke of as the "white wench" with the "black eyes." Rosalind proceeds to scold Silvius and then Phebe:

You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman: 'tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favoured children.
'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her. . . .
But, mistress know yourself: down on your knees
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love:
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can: *you are not for all markets.*
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer. . . .

How often in his heart did Shakespeare cry to Mary Fitton: "You are the light of the world to me, but to me only: *you are not for all markets.* I am a thousand times *a properer man than you a woman.*" The fact that Phebe falls in love with

the youth who scolds and despises her, shows that Shakespeare even when most in love knew a good deal about the "madding fever."

The whole tirade is astonishing in its realistic passion, and its truth makes Rosalind live for us in spite of the fact that otherwise her character is very poorly drawn. For the heart of the matter is that there are no faults at all in her, and therefore in spite of the fact that her portrait is by far the more elaborate of the two, Beatrice with her imperious, desperate temper (borrowed from Mary Fitton) is the more convincing creation.

In so far as Viola has any character at all she rather resembles Ophelia in patient resignation. When *Twelfth Night* was written, Shakespeare was beginning to take a more serious view of life. The three comedies we are now considering, *Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night,* all belong to the honeyed summer-time of Shakespeare's life when his faculties had reached maturity and yet were exercised with the ease and joy that tell of youthful hope and vigour. They were all written between 1598 and 1600; in the first sweet years of his love for Mary Fitton, when he was still under the spell of her proud, witty, and self-confident beauty and could still persuade himself that at

least she loved him better than she loved any one else, and might yet love him to the exclusion of all other men. About this time he says in a sonnet:

> For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
> Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT PHOTOGRAPH OF HIS LOVE: LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST: ROSALINE AGAIN

I MUST now turn from these idealistic portraits of Mary Fitton and retrace my steps a year or two in order to study the first great realistic portrait which Shakespeare painted of his mistress. The likeness of Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost* is bitten in for us with the acid of jealous passion. Minor poets and literary dilettanti, such as Mr. Andrew Lang, have found in this fact a reason to reject my whole story. If Shakespeare, they argue, had indeed discovered as early as Christmas 1597 (when *Love's Labour's Lost* was revised) that his love was faithless to him (and we will call her Mistress Mary Fitton to please Mr. Harris's childish need of names), how is it that afterwards in 1598 and 1599 he climbed the heights of joy in the three great comedies, *Much Ado, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night?*

The objection only shows where my critics

stand. Life appears to be a closed door to nine out of ten of them. They have no experience of passion whatever; no more knowledge of love apparently than if they had no hearts at all.

Mary Fitton changed the world for Shakespeare; gave him golden days of tenderness and divine hours of delight. True, he found out very quickly that she was a wanton; but that did not diminish the sweetness of her kisses to him. Probably even, gentle as he was, it intensified his passion. And when she was faithless to him he grew wild with rage and jealousy. This sharp alternation of joy and bitterness, idealistic admiration and realistic contempt; this ebb and flow is the very sign of a supreme passion, its mark and method. In due course we shall find that these alternations gradually waned out in the course of years into an ever-increasing bitterness.

Let me now go back and consider, feature by feature, the first great photograph of Shakespeare's mistress. She appears in *Love's Labour's Lost* and is again called Rosaline. This Rosaline is described in the comedy with such particularity; we are given so many details both of body and soul, that it is impossible to doubt the sincerity and fidelity of the portrait. I have already pointed out that for fewer and weaker

reasons, one is compelled to believe that the picture of Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet* is a snapshot, so to speak, of Mary Fitton. A dozen peculiarities, such as a white complexion, high forehead and black hair and eyes for the outward, and hardness of heart, word-wit, and a disposition to torture her lover for the spirit, are enough traits when taken together with other peculiar features, to establish her identity. But here we have not a dozen peculiarities as in the case of Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet,* but a hundred, and all astonishing.

I shall make no excuse for carrying these investigations into minute details and repetitions, for this is the heart of my study, and I want to convince the fair-minded reader that on this point doubt is impossible. And even here I must skip almost as many proofs as I shall use.

First of all let us fix the date. *Love's Labour's Lost* was revised and expanded by Shakespeare most carefully for a performance before the Queen at Whitehall which took place as a part of the Christmas festivities in 1597. The figures of Biron and Rosaline were then no doubt redrawn and their relations defined.

Biron, as I have shown elsewhere, is an excellent portrait of Shakespeare himself; but there is

very little characterization in the other personages. The king and his lords are all witty, amorous, talkative; in fact more or less mouthpieces of the poet. The Princess of France, and her ladies, are not differenced in any way; they are mere lay figures to show off Shakespeare's wit. The puerility of the character-drawing is extraordinary, except in the case of Biron and still more in that of Rosaline, who is pictured to the finger-tips.

Rosaline is made to praise Biron, before he appears, as a merry man and a most excellent talker; and when they meet they indulge in a tourney of wit, in which Rosaline more than holds her own, showing indeed astounding self-assurance, spiced with a little contempt of Biron; Mercutio called her, it will be remembered, "hard-hearted." Every word in this first encounter deserves to be weighed.

BIRON. Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?
ROS. Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?
BIRON. I know you did.
ROS. How needless was it then to ask the question!
BIRON. You must not be so quick.
ROS. 'Tis 'long of you that spur me with such questions.
BIRON. Your wit's too hot, it speeds too fast, 'twill tire.
ROS. Not till it leave the rider in the mire.
BIRON. What time o' day?
ROS. The hour that fools should ask.

BIRON. Now fair befall your mask!
Ros. Fair fall the face it covers!
BIRON. And send you many lovers!
Ros. Amen, so you be none.
BIRON. Nay, then will I be gone.

This is surely the same Rosaline whom Romeo describes for us:

> . . . She'll not be hit
> With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's wit.

The parting of the two is a *replica* of their meeting, and need not be reproduced. Rosaline shows herself as witty as Biron, but while Shakespeare-Biron makes up to her, she scorns him. Biron retires, but before he goes off altogether, he cannot help questioning the French lord Boyet about Rosaline and the three or four points of similarity which we have already noticed are materially increased:

> BIRON. What's her name in the cap?
> BOYET. Rosaline, by good hap.
> BIRON. Is she wedded or no?
> BOYET. To her will, sir, or so.

Now this "to her will, sir, or so" might have been taken from the sonnets. The "dark lady" of the sonnets was "rich in will," we know. Sonnet 135 begins:

> Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy *Will*,
> And *Will* to boot and *Will* in overplus.

Now in the play this touch is extraordinarily significant, for Shakespeare's maids are not usually wedded to their "will" in any sense, much less in the various senses in which he uses the word "will"; for Shakespeare understands "will" in the usual sense and also in the sense of desire and of course as a proper name.

The next time we meet Biron in the play we find that he has written a sonnet to Rosaline and this is the way he describes her to Costard:

When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,
And Rosaline they call her; ask for her.

In fact, Shakespeare takes care to explain to us why he has selected this name Rosaline for his love in two different plays.

We are told, too, that Biron gives Costard a shilling for carrying the sonnet, a sum about equivalent to ten shillings of our money. Biron was evidently as free-handed as Shakespeare himself.

As soon as Costard goes off after receiving, as he says, "'leven pence farthing better" than what he regards as "remuneration," Biron indulges in a long characteristic soliloquy:

And I, forsooth in love! I, that have been love's whip;
A very beadle to a humorous sigh; . . . .

and so on for a dozen lines or more: then again he exclaims:

> What! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
> A woman, that is like a German clock. . . .

And so on and on.

All this is eminently and peculiarly characteristic of young Shakespeare. A little before this he was a lord of love, taming shrews and making his heroines run after his vagrant heroes: now the inconstant hero himself is limed hand and foot and strives in vain to free himself.

What does Biron think of his charmer? He tells us in a monologue, and uses words so unexpected, so out of keeping with the play that we are compelled to regard them as a deliberate painting by Shakespeare of his mistress at this time, when he is evidently vexed by her coldness or unfaithfulness. Biron says:

> Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all;
> And, among three, to love the worst of all;
> A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
> With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;
> Ay, and, by heaven, one that will do the deed
> Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard:
> And I to sigh for her! to watch for her!
> To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
> That Cupid will impose for my neglect
> Of his almighty dreadful little might.
> Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan:
> Some men must love my body and some Joan.

Shakespeare, as we know, was "perjured" in loving Mary Fitton, for he was already married and he makes the same accusation against himself in sonnet 152, where he calls himself, "perjured." But the identification of Biron with Shakespeare, is not so astonishing as this description of the "dark lady," Mary Fitton. First of all, among the three maidens of the princess, Biron says he loves "the worst of all." This brings us up with a jerk. We had thought all the ladies good; besides a man as a rule believes his love is best of all, but Biron describes Rosaline as "the worst of all." This is a blot on the play. It diminishes our interest in Rosaline as a heroine and in Biron and in the play. But Biron not only asserts plainly that his love is a wanton, which a man would hardly confess to himself, but he repeats the charge and blackens it:

> Ay, and, by heaven, one that will do the deed
> Though Argus* were her eunuch and her guard.

All the characteristics of Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet* are here repeated with emphasis and with completer knowledge. And the spiritual identi-

* In the pretended quarrel in the last act of *The Merchant of Venice* Portia warns Bassanio that she is not to be trusted:
Lie not a night from home: watch me like Argus.

fication is not more complete than the bodily identification.

Mercutio tells us that Rosaline was "a white wench" with "black eyes"; Biron describes her here as:

> A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
> With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes.

Rosalind's words in *As You Like It*, Act III, scene v, are just as precise:

> 'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
> Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream. . . .

And soon we shall see from sonnet 127 that Shakespeare describes his dark mistress in the same way:

> . . . my mistress' brows are raven black,
> Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem.

As we have already remarked, Shakespeare has not painted any character for us in any play with this photographic exactitude. Such painting, too, is totally out of place in a play. The contrast, moreover, between this detailed bodily description of Rosaline and the other characters is extraordinary. No other character in the play is described at all. They are mere witty, heed-

less, playful, lay figures, but Biron lives for us, though we don't know what he was like physically, but we know this Rosaline already as if we had met her, as if she were one of our intimates. Among the lifeless masks she fairly startles us with her living, breathing reality.

Now all these extraordinary particulars combine to prove that in Biron and Rosaline we have speaking portraits of Shakespeare and his love, Mary Fitton. The effect of each piece of evidence is cumulative and the weight of each piece is enormously increased by its peculiarity. I venture to say that the person who can still doubt is incapable of weighing evidence and the multiple effect of such details.

Another circumstance makes this cruel photograph of Rosaline more interesting still to us. This play was given at Whitehall, Christmas, 1597. Mary Fitton would almost certainly be among the ladies of Elizabeth's court who listened to it. Shakespeare and his fellows would be playing in it; perhaps, indeed, Shakespeare himself took the part of Biron and described Mary Fitton to her face so exactly that many persons must have recognized her and understood both his love for her and the accusation he brought against her. The only possible explana-

tion is twofold. First of all Shakespeare's passion had already reached the intensity of a sex-duel. His mistress had tormented him so that he delights in calling her "wanton" to her face in public, when one would have expected from the gentle Shakespeare all sorts of high-flown compliments and endearing courtesies. The second part of the explanation is no less certain; in the court at that time the accusation of lightness brought against a maid-of-honour must have been taken very lightly. Shakespeare is so hurt that he cannot help telling the truth about his mistress; * it will not be regarded, however, as a dishonouring charge, but a charge at which one laughs, much in the same way as one would laugh to-day, if a girl were accused of being overfond of dancing. When Mary Fitton, a little later, bore an illegitimate child to Lord William Herbert the affair was apparently passed over with indifference; she was not dismissed or disgraced, as with our ideas we might have expected. But though in that court an accusation of wantonness would merely cause amusement, Shakespeare used it seriously; he meant to wound with it.

* In sonnet 140 he warns her not to drive him to despair or

> . . . I should grow mad
> And in my madness might speak ill of thee.

Nothing could show the extremity of his passion more clearly.

Now we come almost immediately to another series of proofs. Shakespeare at thirty-three was one of the best heads in the world. He knew perfectly well when he had made things clear to us, and when he repeats the same features again and again with needless iteration it is safe to say that he had some personal reason for it. It is not a merit in dramatic art; but here, though he has already painted Rosaline for us with heavy brush-strokes, giving an infatuated young man's opinion of her in the harshest words, he goes on to repeat the strokes again and again and again, as he never repeats them in any other play. His desire to expose his mistress is so extraordinary that it has the same effect as if he had resolved to tell us that this Rosaline was the one love of his life and she was a harlot.

The next time we meet Rosaline she has a bout of word-fence with the French lord Boyet, just as she has had twice already with Biron, and this time the contest of wits ends suggestively:

> Ros. Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it.
> Thou canst not hit it, my good man.
> Boyet. An I cannot, cannot, cannot,
> An I cannot, another can. . . .

This merry and suggestive *riposte* no doubt brought down the house, for the suggestion is carried still further in the remainder of the scene. Here we have the explanation of the extraordinary and confessed sensuality of Julia, Juliet, Portia and the rest: Mary Fitton-Rosaline with her bold speech was the model.

The third scene of the fourth act opens with a long soliloquy of Biron which is astoundingly sincere and realistic.

> The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch,—pitch that defiles: defile! a foul word. Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say the fool said, and so say I, and I the fool: well proved, wit! By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax; it kills sheep; it kills me, I a sheep: well proved again o' my side! I will not love: if I do, hang me; i' faith, I will not. O, but her eye,—by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. By heaven I do love; and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady! . . .

One has only to look at this to see how the touches already given are multiplied. Biron begins with a word-play on "pitch," plainly taking us back to his "whitely wanton:"

> With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes.

Then this soliloquy with its expression "defile" and "foul word" reminds us of sonnet 148, where he speaks of his mistress' "foul faults." This Biron rages against himself as no doubt Shakespeare raged: "I will not love;" but it is her eyes that make him love, those black eyes that he talks of again and again in the very first sonnet (127) addressed to his "dark lady"; the eyes he compares to that "full star that ushers in the even."

In this soliloquy, too, we learn that Biron wrote sonnets to Rosaline and sent them to her, just as Shakespeare no doubt sent the sonnets he had written about her to Mary Fitton.

Then Biron stands aside while the King and other gentlemen come in without seeing him and confess their love. Biron has a few lines of comment, in which we could swear Falstaff was speaking. The resemblance is so extraordinary that though it is outside my subject for the moment, I must give it; when Longaville reads his sonnet, which by the way is very brother to Biron's sonnet, Biron says:

> This is the liver-vein, which makes flesh a deity
> A green goose, a goddess: pure, pure idolatry.
> God amend us, God amend! we are much out o' the way. . . .

A little later on this Biron shows that all the denigrations showered on Rosaline are mere evidence of passion. As soon as Biron's love is about to be discovered, he avows it boldly, calls his mistress "heavenly Rosaline" and praises her exactly as Shakespeare afterwards in his proper person praises the "dark lady" in the sonnets: he declares that every one must bow their vassal heads before "the heaven of her brow" and talks about her "majesty," just as in sonnet 150 he talks about her "powerful might." It was the "strength" of Mary Fitton's personality which made the deepest impression on our poet. The next moment Biron gives the best and strongest proof of love. His mistress can stand being seen as she is. He says:

Fie painted rhetoric! O she needs it not:
To things of sale a seller's praise belongs,
She passes praise; then praise too short doth blot. . . .

In sonnet 130, too, we have the same perfect sincerity, the very habit of intense passion:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun,
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. . . .

The King then describes this Rosaline and pro-

tests that she is not beautiful; in sonnet 148 we are told "the world" says she is not fair.

The dialogue goes on:

KING. By Heaven, thy love is black as ebony.
BIRON. Is ebony like her? O wood divine!
O wife of such wood were felicity.
O, who can give an oath? where is a book?
That I may swear beauty doth beauty lack
If that she learn not of her eye to look:
No face is fair that is not full so black.
KING. O paradox! Black is the badge of hell,
The hue of dungeons and the suit of night;
And beauty's crest becomes the heavens well.
BIRON. Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light.
O, if in black my lady's brows be deck'd,
It mourns that painting and usurping hair
Should ravish doters with a false aspect;
And therefore is she born to make black fair. . .

All this is exactly like the sonnets: take the first sonnet to the "dark lady" (127), the first line runs:

In the old age black was not counted fair. . . .

The identical traits are simply numberless and are often of the very soul. There is no quality more clearly marked in Shakespeare, not even his love of music and flowers, than his contempt for women who paint and make themselves up. Mary Fitton was apparently too proud of her youth and too conscious of her beauty to use ar-

tifice to improve it. We find the trait for the first time here in Shakespeare-Biron. Biron jibes at the other lords:

> Your mistresses dare never come in rain,
> For fear their colours should be wash'd away. . . .

The King retorts:

> 'Twere good, yours did; for, sir, to tell you plain
> I'll find a fairer face not wash'd to-day.

It is evident that Mary Fitton disdained to paint or do herself up or bother about putting on false "usurping" hair. The trait appealed intensely to Shakespeare, for he recurs to it again and again. In *Hamlet* he naturally handles it most frequently and frankly. Hamlet says to Ophelia:

> I have heard of your paintings too, well enough,
> God has given you one face and you make yourself another. . . .

and again at the end:

> Let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come.

In *Measure for Measure* Shakespeare goes a little further:

> Your whores, sir, . . . using painting,
> Do prove my occupation a mystery;

and in *Timon* further still: Timon tells Phrynia and Timandra to paint till:

> . . . a horse may mire upon your face.

The love of truth and simplicity abode with Shakespeare to the end.

In the time of Elizabeth it was the custom for all poets and courtiers to praise red hair and a fair complexion as flunkey-compliments to the Queen; but covered by the cloak of anonymity, Shakespeare will prove to us that he thinks his mistress' black hair more beautiful than red. This passage is intensely significant to those who understand Shakespeare's snobbishness. Biron says:

> Her favour turns the fashion of the days,
> For native blood is counted painting now;
> And therefore red, that would avoid dispraise,
> Paints itself black, to imitate her brow. . . .

There can be no lingering doubt in any fair mind that in this Rosaline of *Romeo and Juliet* and of *Love's Labour's Lost,* Shakespeare is describing his mistress, the "dark lady" of the second sonnet-series and describing her against his custom in play-writing, even more exactly than he described her in the lyrics. Call her by what name you will, that fact at any rate is established.

Strange to say her chief bodily peculiarities are given far more precisely in *Love's Labour's Lost* than they are given in the sonnets, though in the play such bodily description is wholly out of place, whereas it adds intimacy and veracity to the lyric poems. The explanation of the artistic blunder is simple: *Love's Labour's Lost* is earlier than the sonnets. When Shakespeare first met Mary Fitton he could not help describing her even in the plays: she had taken all his senses captive.

We know this Rosaline sufficiently, one would imagine in these first four acts, through the passion of Biron and the descriptions given by him and by the king and by the other gentlemen, but we are to have still another *replica* of her portrait, this time by the ladies of the Princess. Rosaline banters Katharine and Katharine answers her:

> . . . . had she been light, like you
> Of such a merry, nimble stirring spirit,
> She might ha' been a grandam ere she died:
> And so may you, for a light heart lives long.
> Ros. What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?
> Kath. A light* condition in a beauty dark. . . .

* Portia, too, plays on this word "light":

> Let me give light, but let me not be light.

I mention this just to show that the same words come to Shakespeare's mind whenever he is thinking of love.

And as if this "lightness of character" in a dark beauty had not been drummed into us often enough it is repeated again:

Ros. Look, what you do, you do it still i' the dark.
KATH. So do not you, for you are a light wench. . . .

Now this Rosaline tells us a little more about Biron: he has praised her, she says, as if she were the fairest goddess:

I am compared to twenty thousand fairs.
O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter!
PRIN. Anything like?
Ros. Much in the letters; nothing in the praise. . . .

It is as if Shakespeare, speaking through Rosaline, had gone out of his way to assure us that what he as Biron has said of Rosaline is exactly true; but indeed in this scene alone there are a hundred proofs of the similitude of his portrait.

Rosaline declares that men are fools to purchase mocking as Biron does and she goes on:

That same Biron I'll torture ere I go;
. . . . . .
How I would make him fawn and beg and seek,
And wait the season and observe the times,
And spend his prodigal wits in bootless rhymes,
And shape his service wholly to my hests,
And make him proud to make me proud that jests! . . . .

Surely it is true that his love made Shakespeare

beg and fawn and spend his prodigal wits in bootless rhymes, and surely he was "proud to make her proud." The whole description is astonishing in its cruel veracity.

The princess says:

> None are so surely caught, when they are catch'd
> As wit turn'd fool. . . .

And Rosaline answers her:

> The blood of youth burns not with such excess
> As gravity's revolt to wantonness.

Now here is one more indubitable proof that Shakespeare when writing about Biron's passion is really writing about his own. Biron is pictured as young again and again in the play; he has never been distinguished for "gravity" but for talkativeness and wit. The princess calls him "quick Biron": Rosaline herself has told us that he is witty and talkative. The two lines are surely Shakespeare criticizing himself. When he revised this play at thirty-three he thought himself old. Just as he calls himself old in the magnificent sonnet which begins:

> That time of year thou mayst in me behold
> When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
> Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.

When he wrote this sonnet at thirty-three or thirty-four he did seem old no doubt in comparison to Mary Fitton who was only nineteen. That's what he is thinking of when he makes Rosaline talk out of character of Biron's love as "gravity's revolt to wantonness."

There are still more proofs in this play that Shakespeare has painted himself and his love for us under the names of Biron and Rosaline. A little later Biron tells her that he will do anything for her: and Rosaline, by way of answer to this declaration, calls for music, for no earthly reason save that all Shakespeare's favourite characters ask for music. When the "dark lady" played to him he called her "my music."

Again and again Biron declares his devotion while Rosaline mocks him:

> Biron. O, I am yours, and all that I possess!
> Ros. All the fool mine?

At length he drops all affectation and humour and jesting and comes to plain words:

> Henceforth my wooing mind shall be express'd
> In russet yeas and honest kersey noes:
> And, to begin, wench—so God help me, la!—
> My love to thee is sound, sans crack or flaw.
> Ros. Sans sans I pray you.

Biron replies out of Shakespeare's ver

> . . . Yet I have a trick
> Of the old rage: bear with me, I am sic
> I'll leave it by degrees . . .

Shakespeare-Biron is speaking here mo
than he knows. Shakespeare is about t
his gay comedies and his light witty spe
rhymes and his conceits for simple prose
rible tragedies. His "dark lady" is
cure him of all affectation and lightness o
and even of gaiety and hope. This is the
profound irony in the Sophoclean sense
adds tragic significance to the whole end
play. A little later Biron says in words t
prophetic: "Honest plain words best pie
ear of grief." The talk at the end is alt
too earnest for the play: Rosaline even pr
finally that if after twelve months she finds
free of flout and jest she will be "right jo
his reformation."

Whether it was a reformation or n
black-eyed mistress with the creamy ski
tainly wrought a complete change in
speare's life and art. It was his love fo
the gypsy-wanton, which brought him to
edge of life, and turned him as I have sai
where from "a light-hearted writer of con

ories into the author of the greatest trag-
ıat have ever been conceived." Shake-
owes the greater part of his renown to
Fitton. How she must have tortured him
ne wrote that wonderful sonnet:

potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
l'd from limbecks foul as hell within,
ving fears to hopes and hopes to fears,
losing when I saw myself to win!
wretched errors have my heart committed,
st it hath thought itself so blessed never!
have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted
e distraction of this madding fever?
. . . . . .

: "madding fever," as we shall see, was
en then at its height.

CHAPTER VI

THE SONNETS: THE LOVER'S COMPLAI SHAKESPEARE'S DARK MISTRESS

For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as th

IN the previous chapter we identified the line of *Romeo and Juliet* with the R of *Love's Labour's Lost* and proved tha Rosalines are photographic studies of the ' lady" of the second sonnet-series, wh Shakespeare's mistress and love. It has shown also that the idealistic pictures, Juliet, Portia, Beatrice, and Rosalind a portraits of the same woman with her temper mitigated and her wantonness su to passionate loyalty and affection. Shakes has pictured his heart's love for us, as he h tured no one else in all his plays.

Browning tells us that every artist is mented with the desire to find some new w praising the woman he loves; Dante will her picture, Raphael will write her a centu

; he, himself, will use a new verse-form and for one only." Shakespeare felt the eed and satisfied it, not only by pouring very soul to her in sonnets, but especially aring her in both comedies and tragedies y sort of light, so to speak. Mary Fitton only character in all his dramas whom he s shown to us body and soul, and we have e portrait of her but a dozen. He is perly painting her, now in love, now in hate, tall gypsy, queen and wanton, with pitch- eyes and hair, velvet brow, damask white ed lips, and vivid cheeky speech, and her made at least as distinct to us as her body: bold and proud, this Dian, wily huntress n; generous, too, and high-tempered; witty all women and above all women eager to every impulse of desire. When passion's is on him, Shakespeare finds images to y her loveliness to us such as no other poet ound before or since: "thine eyes I love" es, and talks about their "mourning" and "pretty ruth," and then enskies them forby comparing them with that "full star that in the even"; her lips, too, he loves, and a deathless word for them—"those lips love's own hand did make"—the simple

monosyllables kiss and cling, and about he perb figure he has thrown a robe of "m grace" to explain her incommunicable cl And yet the professor-pedants hum and ha purse dry lips and wish there were "som dence of this passion."

The story set forth in the sonnets is cor ing by reason of its simplicity and unexpe ness. Who would have imagined that S speare with the best head in the world an best tongue would have asked another ma plead his cause for him with the woman he lo who would have dreamt that his love would tempted the friend and given herself to him is certain not only from the sonnets, but fror plays that Shakespeare made this mistak have pointed out in *The Man Shakespeare* this same story is set forth three times in t different plays written about this time. It is in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* in the act of which Shakespeare's personal bitte shows itself again and again in spite of the matic cloak. Valentine's words are not t mistaken:

> Thou common friend, that's without faith or lo
> *For such is a friend now . . . .*

The italics are mine.

Much Ado the story is told again, and this it is dragged in by the heels; for it has ıg whatever to do with the plot and is in too serious a theme for the gay comedy. way the story is told, too, shows Shake-ɔ's personal feeling in every line as I have ł in my earlier volume.

Twelfth Night the same incident is used , and these three plays cover roughly the ee years" over which the sonnets extend. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* was probably re- in 1598: Shakespeare's bitterness in it is .e because the betrayal was fresh. In ı *Ado,* which dates from about 1599, the ɔ incident is considered more calmly, more ·ophically, and in *Twelfth Night,* dating 1600, it is merely touched upon.

sending his friend to his love, Shakespeare ɔ a schoolboy's blunder as Benedick tells he paid dearly for it; but the explanation nple enough. Shakespeare was fulfilled, as ave seen, with the peculiarly English rever- for noble birth and social rank. Mary Fit- vas a maid of honour who held her head ; Shakespeare felt himself inferior to her. ı William Herbert was a great noble far ɾe even Mistress Fitton in position; he was a

poet to boot; might, therefore, be able to get th girl to understand her poet's transcendent merits We all long to hear ourselves praised to th woman we love. But Mary Fitton was ninetee and Herbert nearly the same age; she tempte him with her "foul pride" and Shakespeare lo both the friend who had gone as "surety" fc him and his love.

Here the boldest commentators have stoppe but the story does not end here, or we shou only have had from Shakespeare a couple tragedies instead of six or eight. The truth the critics are reading only from the sonnets, a the sonnets here are not clear enough for the though they should be. Even the sonnets s plainly that Mary Fitton's traitorism with H bert took place in the very beginning of the quaintance: Shakespeare cries that his fri was but "one hour" his: and not only do sonnets themselves tell us that they cover a riod of three years, but they show us Sh speare begging Mary Fitton to admit him as "Will" in her many "Wills"—"in the n ber let me pass untold," he cries pitifully— then:

> **For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold**
> **That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.**

Moreover, the sonnets don't speak of one ' foul fault " of Mary Fitton; but of many, and ı the last series addressed to her, Shakespeare oes on complaining of her evil " deeds " and ɛtrayals, till, in the very last sonnet of all, he oans:

And all my honest faith in thee is lost.

But his passionate love did not die with his ıth, as we shall soon see; in fine, Herbert was t an incident; though to Shakespeare the most portant incident in the long chapter of Mary ɪton's unfaith.

All the inferences which can be drawn from ɛ sonnets are established and extended in the ys. Before Herbert came on the scene at all did not reach London as a boy of eighteen 1598), in Christmas, 1597, when *Love's La-ır's Lost* was played at Whitehall, Shake-ɑare had had proof on proof of Mary Fitton's aithfulness: she was even then to him a ɣanton," but curiously enough there is no hint jealousy or of betrayal in Biron's love of Ro-ne which corroborates my argument. Shake-are's passion for his mistress of which we see dawn in *Romeo and Juliet* is still but morning-m in *Love's Labour's Lost,* and only reaches

its burning meridian after the betrayal and towards the end of the second sonnet-series.

I shall be told that in all this I have lost sight of William Herbert and Shakespeare's love for him as shown in the first series of sonnets. In my book, *The Man Shakespeare,* I have given it as my settled opinion that Shakespeare's affection for young Herbert has been exaggerated out of all reason. I have not disguised my belief that to some extent Shakespeare himself is responsible for the misunderstanding; partly out of snobbery, partly out of hope of favours to come, Shakespeare strained the expression of his liking for young Herbert and his admiration for his youth and "bravery" as far as he well could but even in the sonnets he condemned his traitorism with Mary Fitton, and where he could speak more freely in the anonymity of drama, as in the last act of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Much Ado* he showed himself severe to the "false friend" and full of contempt for the "stealer."

But before handling Herbert's relations to Shakespeare and to Mary Fitton let me precise Shakespeare's position in the triangular love duel. The first series of sonnets from 1 to 126 inclusive is addressed to a young man of high

sition, wealth and honourable esteem, whom I take to be Lord William Herbert. One has only to compare and study these first sonnets side by side with the twenty-six sonnets from 127 to 152 which are addressed to the "dark lady" to be struck by the essential difference of feeling. The first seventeen or eighteen sonnets to the young man only beg him to marry and get children so that his beauty may not be lost to the world. The whole appeal is transferred bodily from *Venus and Adonis;* it was natural enough in the mouth of Venus, maddened with desire of Adonis; but when addressed to a young man by a man it rings forced and false. Then follow sonnets, in which the language of affection is strained towards love; but in all, there are only half a dozen of them; and if sonnet 23, where Shakespeare apologizes for forgetting to say

The perfect ceremony of love's rite,

may bring the careless reader to doubt, he has only to read sonnet 20 again to convince himself that his suspicions are mistaken. When sonnet 35 was written, Shakespeare was already on a journey; while sonnet 33 mourns the loss of the friend who was but "one hour mine." The later sonnets tell of "strong offences" and "pretty wrongs," of rivalry with another poet,

of coldness and reconciliation, of old age, of loyalty, and a dozen other things; but of passion *me judice* not one word.

Let me give my whole thought with as much frankness as is permitted to me to-day in England: had sonnet 23 never been written, I should have no need to argue the matter, and in a later chapter I shall show that sonnet 23 must also be explained and accounted for naturally. In all the other sonnets the expressions of affection are either far-fetched or wire-drawn or thin; they all ring affectedly. Compare the two sonnets I shall print here in parallel columns: both handle the same theme; 99 is addressed to the youth, 130 to the woman: can any one doubt which is the expression of passionate desire:

99.

The forward violet thus did I chide:
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride,
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.
The lily I condemned for thy hand,

130.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun:
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun,
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white
But no such roses see in her cheeks;

And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair;
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third nor red nor white, had stol'n of both
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath;
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see
But sweet or colour it had stol'n from thee.

And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go,—
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

In intensity the loves are not to be compared; in fact, passion is not to be found in the first. Among the sonnets to the young man, you suddenly come across one in which there is a thought of the "dark lady" or mention of her, and forthwith the poet's affectations drop from him, and the page throbs and burns with desire. Doubt is impossible: Shakespeare wrote to the youth:

> Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments . . .

and so forth in a strain much appreciated by the

professors. But this is how he writes of the woman:

> What potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
> Distill'd from limbecks foul as hell within . . .

Of course Clapham shudders at this, and Tooting turns away, if indeed Clapham or Tooting ever read anything so immoral; but every writer and every reader worthy of the name knows which expression is of passion and which of strained affection. Take it at its lowest, harsh dispraise is a thousand times as strong as affected eulogy. Herbert may have been Shakespeare's for "one hour," as is said in sonnet 33, though I do not draw the shameful inference, finding it indeed altogether incredible and even absurd. But in any case Herbert had little or no influence on Shakespeare's life or on his art. His ingratitude even, which Shakespeare complains of so bitterly in this play and in that, would certainly have been made just as bitter to Shakespeare by some other false friend, if Herbert had never come into his life. Ingratitude is like yawning—too common to be criminal.

Disillusion came to Shakespeare through Mary Fitton; it was her faithlessness and not Herbert's which rankled in him. Take up all the sonnets addressed to her from 127 to 152 and read them;

there is no such record of passion's ebb and flow, the surging madness of it and the rage, in any other literature. Every sonnet is distinguished by its terrible sincerity. Again and again in the sonnets to the young man, Shakespeare reaches phrases of unearthly spirit beauty; here there are few or none: Shakespeare never forgot his art when writing to the youth; when writing to the woman he was not an artist but a lover. Read 140 for the rage and menace in it:

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain;
Lest sorrow lend me words and words express
The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
Though not to love, yet love, to tell me so;
As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
No news but health from their physicians know;
For if I should despair, I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee:
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.
That I may not be so, nor thou belied,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.

Sonnet 147 is a scream of passion almost maniacal in intensity:

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurseth the disease;
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,

The uncertain sickly appetite to please,
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
And frantic-mad with evermore unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth, vainly express'd;
For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

Sonnet 150 paints his mistress' strength and fascination once for all: the admiration is wrung from him, so to speak:

O, from what power has thou this powerful might
With insufficiency my heart to sway?
To make me give the lie to my true sight,
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
That in the very refuse of thy deeds
There is such strength and warranties of skill
That in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more
The more I hear and see just cause of hate? . . .

Sonnet 151 is a plain confession of lust, and contains, as Mr. Tyler was the first to point out, a fairly clear reference to Mary Fitton's name (*fit one*):

For, thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason;
My soul doth tell my body that he may

Triumph in love; flesh stays no further reason,
But rising at thy name, doth point out thee,
As his triumphant prize. . . .
No want of conscience hold it that I call
Her—"love" for whose dear love I rise and fall.

Finally, in sonnet 152, Shakespeare admits with that impartial intellect which is his most fascinating quality that if his love is twice forsworn and has broken bed vows or marriage vows he himself is twenty times perjured; he has sworn oaths of her "deep kindness":

Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy;
. . . more perjured I,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie! . . .

I must now leave these enthralling poems with their confession of insatiate desire, of maddening jealousy, contempt and rage, to the miserable admission which is also an explanation, that all his vows were selfish—"oaths to misuse her," and the final loss of faith:

. . . . . .

And all my honest faith in thee is lost,
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy;
And to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see;
For I have sworn thee fair, more perjured I,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie!

This is his regret that he ever tried to idealize her or even paint her as possessing "the deep kindness," the soul of goodness we noticed in Julia, Portia and Rosalind.

Before I pass from the lyrics altogether, I must just touch on the poem "The Lover's Complaint," which appeared at the end of the volume containing the first edition of the sonnets in 1609. It looks to me as if it had been written about 1598. It contains careless little sketches of Shakespeare, Mary Fitton, and Lord Herbert, which in the absence of completer evidence we cannot afford to ignore. If I read the poem aright, it tells the story of Mary Fitton's seduction by Herbert, but the recognizable touches are slight and careless, and I would not attach undue importance to it. Still its very slightness and carelessness bear out my contention that it was not Mary Fitton's slip with Herbert, but her perpetual faithlessness, which filled Shakespeare with jealous rage. Any one fault he could have pardoned: it was the understanding that his devotion was poured into a sieve which brought him to despair.

In "The Lover's Complaint" Shakespeare only appears in a couple of verses: here is one that pictures him:

A reverend man that graz'd his cattle nigh,
Sometime a blusterer, that the ruffle knew
Of court, of city, and had let go by
The swiftest hours, observèd as they flew
Towards this afflicted fancy fastly drew,
And, privileg'd by age, desires to know
In brief the grounds and motives of her woe. . . .

The fact that "a reverend man" and one "privileg'd by age" was aforetime a "blusterer" in the city and court strikes me as a would-be confession, but more characteristic of Shakespeare still is the fact that even in the heyday of youth and while fleeting careless hours he "observed" them as they flew. What all these high qualities have to do with cowherding we are not told.

Mary Fitton, too, is recognizable by her pride, for pride has little to do with unkempt hair:

Her hair, nor loose, nor tied in formal plat,
Proclaim'd in her a careless hand of pride; . . .

Shakespeare tells us how she held off from Herbert at first, and soon we shall see that Herbert describes her in the same way:

Yet did I not, as some my equals did
Demand of him, nor being desired, yielded;
Finding myself in honour so forbid,
With safest distance I mine honour shielded. . . .

We have also the explanation of Mistress Fitton's coldness to Herbert at first:

> For further I could say, "This man's untrue,"
> And knew the patterns of his foul beguiling;
> Heard where his plants in others' orchards grew,
> Saw how deceits were gilded in his smiling;
> Knew vows were ever brokers to defiling; . . .

But at length she yielded and "daff'd the white stole of her chastity" to Herbert's pleading. It was his youth and "beauteous" person won her, helped by his cunning tongue. The description of Herbert is the best we have got; though cursory it seems fairly complete:

> His browny locks * did hang in crooked curls;
> . . . . . .
> Small show of man was yet upon his chin. . . .

But it is the next verse which paints him. He is bold and free-spoken, we are told, as he is handsome; he could ride splendidly, too, and was an admirable advocate—at least in his own cause—the qualification is finely characteristic both of Shakespeare and Herbert:

> So on the tip of his subduing tongue
> All kinds of arguments and questions deep,
> All replication prompt, and reason strong,
> For his advantage still did wake and sleep.

* In sonnet 144 Herbert is described as "a man right fair."

As soon as the youth attained his object he left the maiden to grieve for his broken promises and break the rings which he had given her.

In this poem we have, I believe, a slight pencil sketch, as it were, of the three figures, a sketch which is very interesting in its way, though perhaps not in itself sufficient to be convincing. But this faint outline of the relations between Herbert and Mary Fitton is confirmed and strengthened beyond expectation in the play I am now about to handle.

CHAPTER VII

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL: HELENA AND BERTRAM: MARY FITTON AND LORD HERBERT

WHEN *The Man Shakespeare* appeared one of my ablest and most sympathetic critics, Mr. Arnold Bennett, put his finger on my statement that Shakespeare's friendship for Herbert was only superficial as the weakest point in the book. It was to be expected that Mr. Arnold Bennett would show himself a most excellent critic; for fine criticism is only the other side of creative genius. Yet I almost despaired of finding any further evidence on the point, for both Shakespeare's snobbishness and his hope of favours to come from Lord William Herbert (to say nothing about legitimate fear for his own safety) hindered him from telling us frankly what he thought of his high-born faithless friend. He hinted it clearly enough in the sonnets, and more clearly still when protected by the dramatic shield in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Much Ado;* but something more was wanted.

The Women of Shakespeare

When I was asked to write of *The Women of Shakespeare* I was on a holiday in the south of Italy, far away from my books, and without the notes made in earlier readings; this deprivation brought me good fortune. Reading all Shakespeare over again without conscious prepossession I found in a later play, *All's Well*—a play I had always disliked in spite of Coleridge's extravagant eulogy, and therefore had read too cursorily—a passage of extraordinary significance, a passage which shows us Herbert to the life and his inexpressibly vulgar and caddish view of his relations with Mary Fitton. I confess my oversight the more easily because it only proves how little I have been inclined to strain plain inferences.

We can see Herbert now in the light of Shakespeare's mature judgment. With supreme art he gives us Herbert's own view of the seduction of Mary Fitton. We have, in fact, Herbert's confession as if taken down from his own lips, with the "i's" dotted and the "t's" crossed, and those who can read it and still believe in a guilty intimacy between the two men are greatly to be pitied.

All's Well that Ends Well remains, in spite of the early sketch which is its skeleton, so to

speak, a work of the master's maturity. As I have said, it is of capital importance, for it fills a gap in our knowledge, making clear not only Herbert's view of Mary Fitton, but what is of infinitely more interest to us the way Shakespeare regarded his high-born patron, friend, and rival.

The picture of Helena in this play has been so bepraised that it demands attentive scrutiny: Coleridge called Helena "the loveliest of Shakespeare's characters" and the professor-mandarins all echo this nonsensical eulogy. It will be convenient to deal with this minor matter first; for it affords an easy entrance to the heart of the greater problem.

The features of Helena are outlined almost beyond power of modification in the first scene of the first act. She admits she is in love with "a bright particular star" Bertram:

> . . . . my imagination
> Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.
> I am undone: there is no living, none
> If Bertram be away . . .

This is hardly the way a young girl confesses her love even to herself; it is needlessly emphatic.* Then Parolles comes to view, whom she

* Unless, indeed, it is Shakespeare's idea of Mary Fitton's passion for Herbert.

weighs up far too correctly as a "notorious liar," a coward, and "a great way fool"; yet she engages at once with this fool and coward, in a long wordy discussion on virginity, which she admits "is weak in defence" while confessing that she wishes to lose it "to her own liking."

Then she talks of Bertram at court, and uses images in swarms to show off her word-wit, after the fashion of the time and the custom of young Shakespeare; and, lastly, she becomes thoughtful, almost philosophic, in the rhymed soliloquy that begins:

> Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
> Which we ascribe to heaven: . . .

This monologue ends with the tawdry affected words:

> . . . who ever strove
> To show her merit, that did miss her love?
> The King's disease—my project may deceive me,
> But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me.

In all these eighty or a hundred lines there is hardly a hint of feminine characterization. It is as poor, as lifeless, a sketch as any of Shakespeare's early failures in the same field. Helena's best words are those in which she pictures her lover; she admires his "arched brows," "hawking eyes" and "curls." I must just note

that this physical description, being very rare in Shakespeare, is important; it indicates his extraordinary interest in the character of Bertram.*

The chief peculiarity in Helena's character so far is coarseness in thought and words, and this coarseness is a characteristic of the majority of Shakespeare's heroines. English criticism following Coleridge has exhausted ingenuity in explaining and excusing it. The defence is simple: the whole fault lies, if you please, in the time: Shakespeare's heroines are cleaner-minded than Fletcher's, and what could one wish for more than that? But all primitive times were not coarse; Homer and Sophocles are free of the fault, and Dante's Francesca is a model of reticent delicacy of speech. It looks as if the fault were in our race, or, to speak more truly, in the author, and though we should not be far wrong if we concluded that the talk which went on among the young noblemen on the stage in Shakespeare's time was as lewd as it well could be, and nine out of ten of the young women whom he

* The "curls" too and pride connect Bertram with the faithless young lover whom we naturally took to be Herbert in *The Lover's Complaint*—

His browny locks did hang in crooked curls.

met in the theatre were quite willing to bandy obscenities with their aristocratic admirers, still the coarseness of speech found in his dramas must be ascribed to his individual preference. Sophocles and Aristophanes in this respect, though of the same period, were poles apart, and Spenser was far more mealy-mouthed than our world-poet. It is certain, too, from Mercutio and Hamlet, and the ever-famous Nurse, that Shakespeare himself enjoyed jests which in our more squeamish times would startle a club smoking-room. I find no fault with him on this account, but when he depicts pure maidens enjoying the high flavour of such discussions, I can only say that he commits an offence against Nature and an error in art. He does not make Helena more real to us by her eagerness to talk of her virginity, but less real. It has never been a characteristic of young girls to like to discuss this theme with men whom they despise. The truth, of course, is that Mary Fitton was excessively sensual, bold and free-spoken, and because of his love for her Shakespeare was continually tempted to ascribe her qualities to his heroines. Raphael, it is said, gave the brown, almond eyes of his mistress to all his Madonnas.

When questioned by the Countess, Helena is

forced to admit the secret of her love; true, she fences at first with words; but, as soon as she has brought herself to confess, her avowal becomes as frank and passionate as a young man's would have been. This long speech belongs to the later revision, and is manifestly Shakespeare's own confession. Here are some lines:

> I know I love in vain, strive against hope;
> *Yet in this captious and intenible sieve*
> *I still pour in the waters of my love*
> *And lack not to lose still: thus, Indian-like*
> Religious in mine error, I adore
> The sun* that looks upon his worshipper,
> But knows of him no more . . .

If any one doubts that this is Shakespeare speaking in his proper person of his love for Mary Fitton, let him consider the lines which I put in italics. Helena goes on:

> . . . O! then, give pity
> To her *whose state is such, that cannot choose*
> *But lend and give where she is sure to lose;*
> That seeks not to find that her search implies,
> But riddle-like, lives sweetly where she dies!

* Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost* is a mere mask of Shakespeare himself, and Biron says to Rosaline:

> Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face
> That we, like savages, may worship it.

But it is the "captious and intenible sieve" which convinces me that Shakespeare is here giving expression to his own regret.

The sad, Viola-like resignation of the last verses is untrue to Helena; for Helena has already told us that her "intents are fix'd"; already she means to cure the King and ask for Bertram's hand in recompense.

Her persuasion of the King, too, has nothing feminine in it; it is, indeed, curiously calm and rational in tone:

> What I can do, can do no hurt to try,

and when the King asks her how long the cure will take, she bursts into a parody of poetry:

> The greatest grace lending grace,
> Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
> Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring,
> Ere twice in murk and occidental damp
> Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp. . . .

and so forth in a way that ought to have frightened, or at least exasperated, his Majesty, instead of convincing him.

When asked "what she will venture" on the cure, she answers as a young lyric poet contemptuous of feminine modesty might answer:

> Tax of impudence,
> A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame,
> Traduc'd by odious ballads: my maiden's name
> Sear'd otherwise; nay, worse of worst extended,
> With vilest torture let my life be ended.

The rhyme here adds a touch of exquisite comicality to such boasting as would befit Parolles or even the immortal Pistol.

Then the "pure and exquisite Helena," as Professor Herford calls her in the Eversley Edition, boldly asks in payment of her service for the husband she may select. Of course all this stuff is beneath criticism: one might as well take the miaullings of a midnight cat for eloquence as this for the dramatic presentation of a maiden's character. Helena hardly speaks at all; is, in fact, nothing more than the mouthpiece of young Shakespeare's crude opinions. A few phrases of his later writing glitter here and there; but they are embedded in a lot of rhymed nonsense and only serve to confuse our view of the girl.

As we have now reached the middle of the second act, it would be almost impossible for any art to make Helena live for us. Shakespeare, however, seems to have made up his mind to attempt the impossible, for we now meet continually the revision of his riper manhood. When asked to choose her husband, Helena suddenly forgets her boldness, and begins to talk like a girl: or rather like one of Shakespeare's girls, say Portia for choice:

I am a simple maid; and therein wealthiest *
That, I protest, I simply am a maid.
Please it, your majesty, I have done already:
The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,
"We blush that thou shouldst choose; but be refus'd,
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever:
We'll ne'er come there again."

I do not like the second line of this excerpt, though it expresses a sentiment that Shakespeare uses a hundred times; but it is impossible not to admire the way in which the third line almost turns the fault into a beauty. Helena, however, doffs her maiden modesty as suddenly as she assumed it; evidently Shakespeare did not revise her speech to the fourth lord; this "pure" maiden says:

You are too young, too happy, and too good
To make yourself a son out of my blood.

Immediately afterwards she speaks again becomingly to Bertram: indeed just as Portia spoke to Bassanio; Portia says:

. . . her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.

* This "therein wealthiest" reminds me of Portia's "happiest of all."

Helena says:

> I dare not say I take you; but I give
> Me, and my service, ever whilst I live,
> Into your guiding power. This is the man. . . .

One could have wished the last four words away; but the first two lines almost save the situation.

When Bertram declares

> I cannot love her, nor will I strive to do't,

one wonders, in view of the final reconciliation between them, why this Bertram should be so unnecessarily rude and resolved. It was this curt rudeness of Bertram as much as his "curls" and his insensate pride of birth which first made me see that Shakespeare was identifying Bertram with his faithless friend and rival, Lord William Herbert. For this rudeness of Bertram is not only exaggerated beyond the needs of the play, it is also consistent with what we know from history of Herbert's character and of the relations between him and Mary Fitton. After Mistress Fitton had borne him a child, Lord William Herbert was asked to marry her; but he refused peremptorily, "admitting the act," we are told, but denying responsibility.

Bertram's contempt is so wounding that Hel-

ena for the moment renounces her weird courtship; "Let the rest go," she cries; but the mischief's done. Moreover, she takes Bertram's hand as soon as he overcomes his unwillingness to offer it, and marries the man she knows dislikes her. Just as Helena has varied coarse pursuit with modest blushing, so now she varies humility with boldness. She says to Bertram:

> . . . Sir, I cannot say
> But that I am your most obedient servant,

which sounds perilously like farcical exaggeration; the next moment she asks her unloving master for a kiss!

A little later we have the famous passage wherein she pictures Bertram as driven to the wars by her, and pities his "tender limbs" praying the bullets to "fly with false aim." But, good as the verses are, nothing can redeem Helena or render her credible, and the stratagem by which she makes her husband her lover is a thousand times more revolting than the compulsion she has used to make him wed her.

In his youth Shakespeare seems to have known very little about girls and nothing about their natural modesty, which fact in itself throws an evil sidelight upon his wife's character.

"All's well that ends well" is Helena's reiterated excuse. But it will not serve her. Take merely the words:

> But, O, strange men
> That can such sweet use make of what they hate.

The words "sweet use" under the circumstances are an offence: it is a boy's confession, not a girl's.

At the beginning of the play, indeed, Helena is a sort of boy wavering between absurd humility and cheeky boldness; later she becomes a woman at moments, with fine touches in her of pity and affection; the best I can say for her is that she is never more than half realized by the poet. When Dr. Brandes calls her a "patient Griselda" and says that Shakespeare has shed over her figure "a Raphael-like beauty," I excuse him as led astray by English commentators; but when Professor Dowden asserts that Shakespeare could not choose but endeavour to make beautiful and noble the entire character and action of Helena's "sacred boldness" I grin irreverently and recall Heine's contemptuous gibe at English critics.

The truth is that the character of Helena is a mere jumble of contradictions, without coher-

ence or charm; she is not realized clearly enough or deeply enough to live.

The whole story of the play is unsuited to the character of a young girl, and perhaps no care could have made a girl charming, or even credible, who would pursue a man to such lengths or win him by such a trick.

Shakespeare probably sketched out the play early, about the time he was picturing girls running after men, but he had now identified Bertram with Lord Herbert and he could not paint Mary Fitton's love for his rival fairly.

I am glad that just as Dr. Johnson "could not reconcile his heart to Bertram" so Swinburne with as good reason "could not reconcile his instincts to Helena." But the desire to praise every work of Shakespeare was too strong for Swinburne even here, so he went on to talk of the "'sweet, serene, skylike' sanctity and attraction of adorable old age made more than ever near and dear to us in the incomparable figure of the old Countess of Rousillon." This sing-song of praise is undeserved; but a study of the old lady's portrait will bring us by the easiest way to our main thesis, the identity of Bertram with Herbert and his confession. Swinburne evidently took whatever the Countess says as characteriza-

tion, whereas more often than not Shakespeare is using her as a mask to display his own wisdom.

At the very beginning she excuses Helena's passion in memorable words.

> Even so it was with me when I was young.
> If we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn
> Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
> Our blood to us, this to our blood is born;
> It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
> Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth;
> By our remembrances of days foregone,
> Such were our faults—or then we thought them none.

Nowhere else in all his work does Shakespeare try to give us his real opinion about passion, the whole unvarnished truth, as carefully as he does here. Desire belongs rightly to youth, he says, and yet condemns it as the thorn to the rose. Is it a fault? he asks: in youth we did not think so, is his half-hearted answer. Nowhere else do we see more clearly than here how anxious he was to keep a perfect balance, and Emerson's regret that Shakespeare never gave us his whole mind on the highest matters that concern man is a mere confession that Emerson could not read the dramatist. On this matter at least Shakespeare's opinion was far saner, better balanced, and nearer to the heart of truth than Emerson's cheap Puritanism. But is it true, as Shakespeare

appears to think here, that passionate desire is an appanage of youth alone and wanes out with the years? It looks as if he were judging by convention and not after experience.

This speech does not paint the Countess for us. No old lady would be so anxious to keep a perfect balance. If she liked the girl, she might be inclined to smile on her love-sick passion for her son; if she did not like her, she would despise her for it. The Countess is too measured-wise. Or is Shakespeare suggesting here that an old lady would take a somewhat severe view of passion, severer than a man? I think not; that is too subtle for the dramatist: apparently we have here Shakespeare's own opinion, given most scrupulously.*

In the second scene of the third act, the old Countess brings us to wonder. As soon as she hears from her son that he has wedded Helena and not "bedded" her, and has sworn to make the "*not*" eternal, she calls him "rash unbridled boy," declares that she "washes his name out of her blood," and that "twenty such rude boys"

* In *Love's Labour's Lost* the hero Biron, young Shakespeare's *alter ego,* speaks of passion in much the same way, but with two or three years' less experience:

> Young blood doth not obey an old decree;
> We cannot cross the cause why we were born . . .

might serve Helena. She begs the gentleman to go to him:

> . . . tell him that his sword can never win
> The honour that he loses: more I'll entreat you
> Written to bear along . . .

What does this mean? It looks as if Shakespeare were taking Mary Fitton's side against young Herbert. In any case the condemnation is too impartial and far too emphatic in expression for a mother to use about an only son. It sets one thinking therefore. Of course Herbert's mother was "Sidney's sister" and renowned for high qualities. I think Shakespeare had this fine model in mind when drawing the old Countess Rousillon. However this may be, when he portrays a mother judging her only son too severely, he must, at least, have had very special reasons for disliking her son. In just the same way he gets the impartial Abbess in *The Comedy of Errors* to condemn his wife, Adriana, and her continual, jealous scolding. Moreover, it is astonishing that Shakespeare should have cared, in his maturity, to revise so poor a sketch as this *All's Well.* He must have known that the theme was impossible: why did he touch it? Why after working on it did he leave it in such a faulty con-

dition? When Michelangelo leaves a statue unfinished, his *Pietà* of the Rodanini Palace for example, it is because the rough, imperfect modelling, the rude nose, and vast, sightless sockets are more expressive than perfect features would have been. Similarly if Shakespeare takes this unsatisfactory theme in hand and revises it, here carelessly, here with particular, unnecessary detail, it is surely to satisfy some personal need of self-expression. The whole play bristles with difficulties which no critic has ever tried to answer or even to face; let us see if the riddle will not solve itself.

First of all let us settle as near as we can the date of the revision. Several passages help us to this. Everyone remembers how the porter in *Macbeth* speaks of those who go "the primrose * way to the everlasting bonfire." The clown in the fifth scene of the fourth act of *All's Well* gives us the first sketch of that magnificent phrase: he speaks about:

> The flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

Besides we have already caught distinct echoes

* Ophelia, too, in *Hamlet* speaks of "the primrose path of dalliance."

of Portia and hints of Viola in the revision of Helena.

This revision was much earlier than *Macbeth,* yet it is evidently a product of Shakespeare's suffering. To be more exact, it is earlier, I feel sure, than *Hamlet* because it is not so bitter, and probably later than *Twelfth Night* and *Julius Cæsar.* The time further explains why Shakespeare's revision of the character of Helena is so ineffectual. When he revised *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* he did it all of a piece; he had before him the model which afterwards served for Portia; it was his first view of Mary Fitton from a certain distance as a great lady, and he made her credible to us because he pictured her in love with himself. But before revising *All's Well* he had been deceived by Mary Fitton and forced to realize her wantonness; he persisted in loving her, tried to rebuild his ruin'd love; he will not yet tell us the naked truth about her: he still prefers to idealize her, but he simply cannot describe her love for Herbert-Bertram with any charm or sincerity; even the revision, therefore, wavers and is unsatisfactory. For this and other reasons which will soon show themselves I place the revision of *All's Well* about the time of *Julius Cæsar* and slightly before *Hamlet.* But whether

put before or after *Julius Cæsar* matters little; we are near enough to be true to Shakespeare's nature and growth, and that is perhaps better even than temporal truth.

Now let us take up the main question with this knowledge in mind, that Shakespeare revised the play about 1601, after he had been in love for some time with the "dark lady," and after Herbert had betrayed him. When Dr. Johnson condemned Bertram, he was wiser than he knew. It seems to me that Shakespeare's dislike of certain faults in the youthful Herbert comes to light in this harsh sketch of Bertram. Contrary to his custom the dramatist forces us to detest his protagonist. Moreover, though Bertram is by way of being the hero of the piece, he is allowed to speak most contemptuously of the heroine whom Shakespeare evidently intends us to admire. Every quality given to this Bertram must be weighed carefully. From sheer insensate pride of birth he holds Helena "most base," and disdains her as "a poor physician's daughter," though his mother loves her. Furthermore, not only does his mother condemn him and so alienate our sympathy from him, but Parolles speaks of him as "a foolish idle boy; but for all that very ruttish." And though he is shown as having de-

spatched " sixteen businesses . . . a month's length apiece " in a night, and though he is praised on all hands for courage and capacity, Parolles returns to the charge, declaring that the young Count is " a dangerous and lascivious boy who is a whale to virginity and devours up all the fry it finds." Yet this lascivious Bertram refuses to " bed " Helena. These needless contradictions and the extravagantly precise and emphatic accusations of Parolles betray personal feeling. Besides all these charges agree with the contemporary portrait of young Herbert and his lechery given us by Clarendon.

Another weightier point. Shakespeare knows that he is going to end the play happily. As soon, therefore, as Bertram learns that he has slept with Helena, he must change towards her, and show her affection; he does this, declares, indeed, that he will love her " dearly, very dearly." Was it then the embracing which has made his right-about-face possible? It would have been well, one would think, at least to have passed this point over in silence, to have left it to be inferred by our imagination, but Shakespeare loathes this Bertram and makes him assert that the embracing had no effect upon him as, in fact, we know that it had no effect upon

Herbert. But in art the abrupt change of feeling must be motived: why, then, does Bertram suddenly turn from hating to loving Helena? What should be an explanation is expressly ruled out and the improbable is thus made incredible! A man does not veer from hate to love without reason; and Bertram is left without a shadow of reason. But Shakespeare in his maturity does not blunder in this crude way. Such mistakes on his part are always due to personal feeling.

There is another piece of evidence which of itself should be convincing. Bertram's confession that he possessed Diana-Helena is most peculiar; it is worse than unnecessary as we shall see; it would have been better to pass the matter over in silence; yet the confession is dragged in, made circumstantial, and it damns Bertram in the reader's eyes as an unspeakable cad; puts him far lower than his mother's condemnation or Parolles' contempt. Yet, with consummate art, this accusing confession is contrived to strike us as sincere, bears indeed every imprint of truth heightened by careless, off-hand expression. Let us weigh each word of it, for it is surely Shakespeare telling us the actual truth about the connection between Herbert and Mary Fitton. Bertram says:

> . . . certain it is I lik'd her,
> And boarded her i' the wanton way of youth.
> She knew her distance and did angle for me
> Madding my desire with her restraint,
> As all impediments in fancy's course
> Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,
> *Her infinite cunning, with her modern grace,*
> *Subdued me to her rate:* she got the ring:
> And I got that which *any inferior might*
> *At market-price have bought* . . .

Here we have the plain, unvarnish'd truth at last. This is surely Herbert-Bertram's view of Mary Fitton. The lines I have put in italics are of intense interest: the "infinite cunning" with which Mary Fitton maddened eagerness, the affected self-restraint—are all used later to make Cressida and Cleopatra life-like to us; that "modern grace" was Mary Fitton's magic gift we may be sure, as native to her as the utter wantonness laid to her charge in the last two lines here, just as Shakespeare charged her with it again and again in the sonnets, and painted it for us as a vice of blood incurable in his "false Cressida."

Here, too, we have Shakespeare's frank and final judgment of Herbert. Bertram-Herbert paints himself for us to the life as the shallow, selfish, ineffably conceited, aristocrat-cad; not a single virtue in him save the common, hard virtues of vigour and courage. No wonder stout

old Dr. Johnson could not stomach him. The contemptuous truth of the portrait shows that Shakespeare has at length been able to appraise the young nobleman at his proper value. Most likely, indeed, as I have said elsewhere, he saw Herbert in his true colours even earlier, but thought it too dangerous to himself to state his true opinion in his proper person in the sonnets. This elaborate self-judgment of Herbert is in perfect accord with the condemnation passed upon the "false friend" and "stealer" in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Much Ado*. I am delighted, however, to have it here in unmistakable terms, for it not only throws new light on the relations between Herbert and Mary Fitton and his silly pride of birth, but it sets all doubt at rest as to the slight nature of the connection between Herbert and Shakespeare.

Some other indications that I am justified in thus identifying Bertram with Herbert may be given here. As I have said, it is an historic fact that when Miss Fitton bore Herbert a son he was asked to marry her and refused flatly, rudely, just as Bertram out of tune with the comedy refuses imperiously to have anything to do with Helena.

Another interesting point: when Parolles is questioned by the King, he declares that Bertram "was mad for her" and adds that he "knew of their going to bed, and other motions, as promising her marriage, and things which would derive me ill-will to speak of."

That "promising marriage" goes far by itself to establish the identity of Bertram with Herbert, for it has nothing on earth to do with the action; it contradicts indeed both the spirit and letter of the play, for Bertram is married and is to be reconciled to his wife. Shakespeare wishes us to believe that Lord Herbert had promised marriage to Mistress Fitton which the historical fact that he was asked to marry her, seems to imply. Again, the introduction of Parolles here only hems the action. Besides, what does Parolles mean by those "things which would derive me ill-will to speak of"? Is it Shakespeare confessing his own apprehensions to us, or a hint of worse things undivulged as yet on the part of Herbert or both? I think, both, and when we come to study Cressida we shall find the foul insinuation again and have our worst suspicions confirmed. Shakespeare's bitterness was so over-mastering, his dislike of Herbert so intense, that he takes Mary Fitton's side in the

quarrel and tells the dangerous truth while hinting at darker secrets.

This identification of Bertram with Herbert fills up a great gap in our knowledge with curious completeness, and explains what otherwise must be regarded as the most stupid and fundamental blunders in the play.

I am especially delighted to find in Herbert-Bertram's confession the words "modern grace" applied to Mary Fitton. Some critics hold that "modern" should be read "modest," but I prefer "modern" in our sense of the word. I regard the phrase as Shakespeare's acknowledgment of Mary Fitton's novel witchery. That "modern grace" is the touch of inexplicable enchantment which I had been looking for in order to understand his "dark lady's" deathless fascination. In a later and still better portrait of Shakespeare's love, the very same quality in her is selected for praise by the coldest and most impartial of judges. In *Antony and Cleopatra,* Cæsar says of the dead Cleopatra she looks

> As she would catch another Antony
> In her strong toil of grace.

One or two words more in general on this play: Shakespeare is contemptuous of character

in it. As in his latest work, so towards the end of this play, whenever he is led away by personal feeling, he spills himself into this or that character almost indifferently. Take, for example, what the First Lord says:

> The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues . . .

This is certainly our gentle, fair-minded Shakespeare himself speaking without a mask.

The curious way in which Lafeu reads Parolles, is very much in the same vein as Hamlet's later reading of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz and Osric. At length Shakespeare sees the young courtier as he is: "There can be no kernel in this light nut . . ." and again "the soul of this man is his clothes."

It is probable that shortly after betraying him Herbert drew away from Shakespeare. Vain self-love generally teaches us to slight those whom we have injured, and as soon as the powerful patron began to stand aloof, others followed the great lord's example, and Shakespeare was taught what fair-weather friends are worth. The curious point is that he is not bitter at first. His bitterness is an after-growth, sustained by his

ethical judgment; this Lafeu does not condemn Parolles as harshly as Hamlet condemns Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. Indeed he accepts him at the end and asks him to accompany him home; at least he will find amusement in him. Gentle Shakespeare could endure fools gladly as St. Paul advised, for he managed, as Lafeu tells us, to "make sport" with them.

Shakespeare sketched Lafeu as a wise old nobleman as a companion picture to the portrait of the old Countess, but the picture of Lafeu suffers from an all-too-close identification with Shakespeare himself. As in early manhood Shakespeare loved to picture a side of himself—especially his gaiety, wit, and talkativeness—in Biron, Gratiano, and Mercutio, so in maturity he loved to incorporate his honest loyalty in outspoken old gentlemen like Lafeu, Gonzalo, Flavius, Menenius, and Kent.

The gem of the play, however, for us is Herbert-Bertram's confession; it dates the revision; the talk is fresh; it smacks of the deed, and it finally settles the problem of Shakespeare's relations with Lord William Herbert. I can now go on to treat with perfect freedom of Shakespeare's long love-duel with Mary Fitton.

CHAPTER VIII

JULIUS CÆSAR: HAMLET: OTHELLO

Di te mi dolga, amor.—MICHELANGELO.

THOUGH Shakespeare's passion for his gypsy-wanton reached its burning meridian in the sonnets, the long throbbing afternoon of desire was hotter than the full noontide. When he cried his love in the lyrics, he still hoped to win or charm his mistress; but her perpetual unfaith gradually dried up the affection and tenderness in him to the very roots, leaving only the lust of the flesh. Again and again the cruel desire was whipped to frenzy by jealousy, and grew in intensity as his love waned out. Incidentally I shall show that all his great tragedies were phases of his insensate passion for this one woman. She inspired the first great love-song of his youth, *Romeo and Juliet;* she inspired, too, the far finer and more terrible tragedy of mature passion, *Antony and Cleopatra.* All the plays from 1597 on reek of her presence, and Shake-

speare's breakdown in health was due to the fact that he had spent himself body and soul in her earthy-coarse service. When at length she left him finally, after twelve years of passion and a score of betrayals, to be married for the second time early in 1608, he fell, to use Dante's phrase, "as a dead body falls"—never to recover completely. If ever a man was passion's slave it was Shakespeare. We have now to follow his agony from the sonnets to height after height where foot of guide has never yet passed; for the lover was Shakespeare, and every fluctuation of the "madding fever" was marked with a new masterpiece.

A great many English critics are intent on telling me that in painting Shakespeare in this way I am denigrating him, turning him from a demi-god into a mere man. At the very beginning of my labour, Meredith warned me that "Englishmen will not readily accept this picture of Shakespeare languishing and burning." But they are accepting it, it would appear; for truth carries with it a magic of persuasion, and they will yet come to see that, instead of diminishing and degrading Shakespeare, I am bringing him nearer to their love and affection by showing him pure human.

The greatest souls are just those most certain to fall victims to this passion. Goethe's best dramatic scenes came through his love for Frederica, and if he had written his enthralling passion for his drunken cook-wife he would probably have done infinitely better work than by speculating on theories of light. He knew a great deal about passion and its infinite forgiveness and indulgence and very little about colour-waves.

Dante, too, has told us how easily gentle hearts are moved to love:

> Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende.

And Beatrice had to reproach him with many infidelities.

Michelangelo, who was certainly strong among the strongest, had to confess his utter inability to free himself from the bonds of desire:

> Amor, se tu se' Dio
> Scioglimi, deh! dell' alma i lacci tuoi.

It is no disgrace to our gentle Shakespeare to have been enmeshed in the same net, for no one ever turned his thralldom to such account. His passion can be studied in drama after drama, the mere names of which have become tragic symbols in the consciousness of humanity.

For the first three or four years of his intimacy

he continually painted both realistic and idealistic portraits of his mistress. About the year 1600 the idealistic portraits cease. The reason is indicated. In the last sonnet to his dark love one line wells up from the depths of despair:

> And all my honest faith in thee is lost.

From this time on he gave up trying to idealize Mary Fitton. A little later and he will paint her to the life cruelly, strip her to the skin and scourge her with his contempt and hate till we are forced to pity her and take sides against him as a slanderer and a caricaturist who has forgotten in his jealous rage the high impartiality of the artist. But all the while the idealizing tendency was in him, and if he could not employ it in painting Mary Fitton as Julia or Portia or Beatrice, he had to use it on imaginary figures. His mistress's faithlessness made him long for winnowed purity and devoted affection, and he gave name if not reality to this desire of his nature in Ophelia, Desdemona, and Cordelia.

More than almost any other great artist, Shakespeare needed the support of actual life. Give him the realistic features and he will paint a deathless portrait, now of Hotspur, now of the Nurse, but without the help of reality he floats about in

the blue. His Ophelia and his Desdemona have no redeeming vices or weaknesses whatsoever. Ophelia can only weep and go crazy when Hamlet insults her, and when Othello outrages and strikes Desdemona she too weeps and forgives him, while wondering what her trickling eyes may portend. Mary Fitton's high temper and masculine strength put Shakespeare out of love with spirit and courage and marked individuality in women: Ophelia and Desdemona are mere abstractions of patience and affection—pale sister-souls, in fact, or bloodless sister-effigies; hardly a taint of earthly temper or tincture of warm humanity in either of them.

In *Twelfth Night* we see the first tendency to vague idealization coming to view. Viola, with her resignation and patience, is the first sketch, so to speak, of Ophelia. But the outline wavers; "she never told her love," we are assured in a famous passage, while a little later we learn that she told her love for Duke Orsino again and again.

In contempt of my efforts the professors will not see any connection between Shakespeare's experiences as a lover and his *Hamlet*. Professor Herford says: "Nothing that we know of Shakespeare's personal history really explains the start-

ling and sudden intensity of personal accent in Hamlet or the changed outlook upon the world which here first becomes apparent." One can only stare at this black diamond. Shakespeare has sung his love in every stage: the young delight of it in Juliet and Portia; the courtings and the deceptions in Rosaline and Rosalind. He has painted his jealous misery for us in the sonnets; the "potions" he drank of "Siren tears"; the "hell of time" he endured. As Brutus he is in love with despair and goes to death willingly. Yet the self-elected guides find in all this no explanation of what they are pleased to call his "changed outlook upon the world," which they declare "first becomes apparent" in *Hamlet*. Let us now consider this, the second of the great tragedies.

Hamlet is generally dated through its reference to the success of the child-players about 1601: it follows immediately on *Julius Cæsar* and the sonnets.

As I have shown elsewhere, the dominant passions of Hamlet are jealousy of his mother's sin and a desire to revenge himself on his uncle, his love for Ophelia is merely incidental. The most marked peculiarity in the play is so grotesque that it shocks one: no son ever spoke of a moth-

er's unfaith with the passionate bitterness of Hamlet. In spite of the Ghost's warning to him not to taint his mind or contrive aught against his mother, but to leave her to Heaven and her own remorse, Hamlet has gone about with thoughts of murdering her. The mere idea is astounding, but here are his words:

. . . . . .

Let me be cruel, not unnatural
I will speak daggers to her; but use none.

. . . . . .

And a line or two later the thought crops up again. He is far more bitter than his murdered father.

It is manifest from his extravagance of anger that Hamlet-Shakespeare is thinking of his mistress's lechery and not of his mother's; he cries at her:

Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes? . . .
. . . What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! where is thy blush? . . .

Maddened with jealousy, he scourges himself

with his own lewd imaginings as Othello and Posthumus scourge themselves. It is only a professor or commentator, or some expert in cloistered ignorance, who could believe that a man feels this intensity of jealous rage about a mother's sin. The very idea is worse than absurd. It is one's own passion-torture that speaks in such words as these. And Hamlet strikes this note again and again with the persistence of incipient mania, and again and again finds deathless, painting words for his insane jealousy. Though the Queen begs him to "speak no more," he raves on:

> . . . Nay, but to live
> In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed
> Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
> Over the nasty sty—

It is the act that maddens him, as it always maddened Shakespeare. But bitter as is Hamlet's view of his mother's (Mary Fitton's) sin, it is still the bitterness of disappointed love and is not without hope: he will have her repent, refrain from adultery and be pure and good again:

> . . Confess yourself to heaven;
> Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
> And do not spread the compost on the weeds
> To make them ranker. . . .
>
> QUEEN. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAMLET. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not . . .
For use almost can change the stamp of nature. . . .

It is all directed at his mistress: he still hopes for her reformation; but he sees no good whatever in the King. The King (Herbert) is mildewed and foul in comparison with his modest poet-rival—" a satyr to Hyperion ":

A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord. . . .

The extravagance of the comparison shows the personal feeling which quickens this whole play. Take even what the Ghost says, and read it carefully:

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, *with traitorous gifts,—*
O wicked wit and gifts that have the power
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
The will of my *most seeming-virtuous* queen:
O Hamlet, what a falling off was there! . . .

The italics are mine. It is all in character, if you will at first, but it soon shrills out of character:

. . . to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine! . . .

This surely gives us rather Shakespeare's real feeling towards Pembroke than the Ghost's, and then we come to a reflection which is certainly Shakespeare's:

> But virtue, as it never will be moved,
> Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
> So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
> Will sate itself in a celestial bad,
> And prey on garbage. . . .

The chief faults in the play can be explained naturally by this hypothesis of mine, and by this hypothesis alone. Hearing Polonius behind the arras, Hamlet plucks out his sword and kills him, mistaking him for the King. Kindly, humane, reflective Hamlet would naturally be filled with remorse for this rash, thoughtless deed, and at first this is the note Shakespeare strikes: Hamlet echoes his mother and calls it a "bloody deed;" "I do repent," he says; but later, when we expect the cooler blood of regret to come to full utterance, he talks of Polonius with incredible harsh contempt:

> I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room. . . .

One is shocked, appalled by this unnatural cruelty of Hamlet, which is totally out of character. It seems to me that Shakespeare is here again

thinking of Herbert, the real object of his hate, whom often in imagination he had killed with one quick thrust and dismissed from memory as "a foolish, prating knave."

There are scores of proofs of the very obvious fact that Shakespeare has got a passionate intensity into this somewhat unreal tragedy by identifying the chief actors in it with his rival and his mistress. The discrepancies in the play are not otherwise to be explained: for example, we all expect from Hamlet some expression of divine tenderness for Ophelia, but the scenes with the pure devoted girl whom he is supposed to love are not half realized, are nothing like so intense as the scenes with the guilty mother. Yet love should surely be stronger than jealousy of one's mother. Shakespeare did not take interest enough in Ophelia to give her flesh and blood.

Another jar which plays informer: Laertes finds the best word for his unhappy sister: she turned everything "to favour and to prettiness." Why, then, as soon as she goes mad does Shakespeare make her talk smut? Why does even Hamlet talk suggestively to her in the theatre scene? Of course I shall be told that all this is due to Shakespeare's deep insight into human nature; but in a slight and charming

sketch such as Ophelia was meant to be, this obscene coarseness is a blunder. The truth is, while writing this play Shakespeare was writhing in jealous misery; he sees the sexual act everywhere, and defiles his heroine with his mistress's lewdness.

At their first meeting Hamlet talks smut to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern though suggestive speech is not in tune with brooding melancholy. The fact is we can trace in him the beginning of the erotic mania which is to be found in almost every tragedy from this time on. I shall not labour this statement; it is self-evident, and the proofs of it will have to be repeated again and again.

After his betrayal Shakespeare went about nursing his jealousy to monomania—nursing, too, bitter thoughts of revenge on Herbert, though he knew well enough that he did not possess the desperate resolution to carry them into act. Lackey-like, he had to admit that mere regard for position and power would give him stop: Herbert was too far above him:

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king
> That treason can but peep to what it would.

But Shakespeare felt very acutely that any young

nobleman in his position would have had no scruples on the matter; Laertes strides to his revenge with instant, conscienceless resolve. Shakespeare knew that his own gentleness and dislike of violence were in themselves nobler:

> The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance. . . .

And thus Hamlet becomes more lovable to us through his very hesitation and horror of bloodshed.

Hamlet is a magnificent study of the literary temperament, and the picture is made dramatic by the passionate realization of the hero's longing for jealousy and revenge.

Hamlet's love for Ophelia is scarcely strong enough to deserve the name, but his jealousy is a raging, burning fever.

> Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?

is all he can say to Ophelia, but to his mother he raves as one possessed:

> Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
> Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
> Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;
> And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
> Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers . . .

The jealous rage is already almost maniacal in intensity.

Othello is a far finer and more complete study of jealousy and revenge than *Hamlet*. The jealous rage of the sonnets is lifted in *Hamlet* to a higher pitch, and in *Othello* is further intensified to deadly menace and murder by a superb and natural plot. Hamlet's jealousy is unnatural; but Othello's jealousy of Desdemona is almost inevitable; it is reason-founded on difference of colour, education, and surroundings, and is whipped to madness by vile and envious suggestion.

Hamlet is Shakespeare himself, while Othello at first is a marionette of whom we have no intimate understanding. I have pointed out elsewhere that Othello is a fair sketch from the outside of a man of action until he becomes jealous, when he is used as the mere mouthpiece of Shakespeare's own passion. For a master of men Othello is a surprisingly apt subject of jealousy, being exceedingly quick of apprehension and easily convinced on mere surmise. He passes, too, at once to vengeance, and will glut his hate not only on Desdemona, but on Cassio. But the quick change in the painting of Othello from the bluff Captain to the poet-lover is not so soul-

revealing as the fact that in *Othello* Shakespeare has given us the finest words for desire and jealousy in the language:

> . . . O thou weed
> Who art so lovely-fair and smell'st so sweet,
> That the sense aches at thee!

Passion never found a more splendid phrase; and it does not stand alone. When Desdemona lands Cassio cries in Shakespeare's very voice:

> The riches of the ship is come on shore.

And a little later Othello calls Desdemona:

> My soul's joy . . .

and again:

> Excellent wretch.

And if desire is enthrallingly rendered, jealousy finds an even intenser note: Othello's cry is astounding:

> I had been happy, if the general camp,
> Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body
> So I had nothing known. . . .

That "sweet body" is incomparable.

The plain proof that Shakespeare in all this is putting himself in Othello's place and speaking of Mary Fitton is at hand. Othello praises Desdemona as a "sweet creature . . . an ad-

mirable musician": "O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear: of so high and plenteous wit and invention."

Now consider these qualities. We never knew before that Desdemona was an "admirable musician"; while we have already learned from the clown that Othello "does not greatly care to hear music." How are we to explain this manifest contradiction? Shakespeare makes all his men of action, such as Hotspur and Harry V., dislike music, and he begins by lending Othello the same defect; but here in his jealous rage he forgets his puppet's qualities, thinking only of himself. He loved music, as he has shown in a score of plays, and his "dark lady" of the sonnets often charmed him with her playing. Sonnet 128 begins:

> How oft when thou, my music, music play'st.

It is Mary Fitton who Shakespeare feels could sing the "savageness out of a bear." Fancy, too, telling us that poor, patient, superstitious Desdemona was of "high and plenteous wit and invention." Shakespeare's Rosaline was witty, as we know; his "dark lady" of the sonnets too; but hardly Desdemona. Evidently Shakespeare is here thinking of his own mistress.

As soon as jealousy is touched upon, Shakespeare puts himself unconsciously in Othello's place and Desdemona becomes his wanton love. From that moment to the end of the play Shakespeare is Othello, and there are no pages in all literature of a more intimate self-revealing. By his gentle fair-mindedness alone we ought to recognize him:

> O Iago, the pity of it; the pity of it, Iago!

But in truth the whole passion is the passion of jealousy as Shakespeare conceived it. As I have shown in my book, *The Man Shakespeare,* Posthumus, an *alter ego* of Shakespeare, speaks of Imogen exactly as Othello speaks of Desdemona. Hamlet raves about his mother's fault in precisely the same strain as the King in *The Winter's Tale* raves about his wife's supposed slip; they all picture the act and excite themselves to mad rage by their own imagining. In all these plays the hero suspects some women of faithlessness, and usually the woman he loves.

There is another passage in *Othello* which alludes, I believe, to Shakespeare's connection with Mary Fitton, and gives us, to a certain extent, his explanation of why she played false to him. Iago says:

> When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be again to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties. . . .

All this applies to the Moor if you will, but it applies to Shakespeare, too, and his position. In that word "manners" there is to me a glance at young Herbert and Mary Fitton, else why was it brought in?—for there is no hint of any such difference between Othello and Desdemona, though such a difference could be presumed. I find an intimate thoughtfulness in the words, which shows me they are personal: they supply the reason, too, why Shakespeare should handle this theme of the inferiority of an older man to the woman he loves, and fulfil it with such intense passion. Like his Othello, Shakespeare loved "not wisely but too well."

It is, perhaps, worth while to notice that even in the surge and rage of jealous madness Othello-Shakespeare remains an Englishman and a moralist, or, as a foreigner might say, a hypocrite. Othello will kill Desdemona with the sword of "justice," will murder even from a high, unselfish motive—to prevent her betraying "more men."

But as I have said elsewhere, what interests us

in Othello is not his strength but his weakness, Shakespeare's weakness—his passion and pity, his torture, rage, jealousy, and remorse, the successive stages of his soul's calvary.

Macbeth I need only glance at here, for I have handled it elsewhere at great length in order to prove that Macbeth is Hamlet over again in every quality and every defect. Lady Macbeth is just as manifestly an embodiment of the strength and resolution of the poet's mistress. In fact, these are the dominant characteristics which Shakespeare so admired in his "dark lady." Take sonnet 150:

> O, from what power hast thou this powerful might
> With insufficiency my heart to sway? . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
> That in the very refuse of thy deeds
> There is such strength and warranties of skill
> That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds? . . .

But in spite of being closely connected with Shakespeare himself through both the hero and the heroine, *Macbeth* as a play lies on the confines of Shakespeare's activity: it reminds me of *Richard III.* The action is in no way suited to Shakespeare's character, and though he discovers his inmost feelings to us in the person of Mac-

beth, our sympathy is perpetually dammed by the conviction that this literary, lovable, humane, pious Shakespeare-Macbeth would not have murdered a fly, much less the kindly, courteous Duncan.

Lady Macbeth is not one of Shakespeare's happier creations. It is impossible to make a woman credible to us by lending her a man's resolution and courage. True, Lady Macbeth breaks down after the murder; but the fact is we know hardly anything about her. Did she even love Macbeth? She is merely a marble-hard outline like the heroine of a Greek tragedy.

The interest of *Macbeth* is not so much the interest of character or even the interest of drama, though the action is exciting enough in all conscience and well developed, but the interest of divine poetry. Shakespeare has lent his *alter ego* Macbeth his own singing robe, and has embroidered it with magnificent lyric after lyric of his own disillusion and despair.

CHAPTER IX

LEAR AND TIMON: EROTIC MANIA

THE tragedies which follow after the sonnets are distinguished by ever-increasing passion and bitterness. The mere names are like steps leading down into the dark places of desire and despair: *Julius Cæsar, Hamlet, Othello.*

Macbeth is more bitter than any of these; but it has no lust in it, and consequently is not so complete an index to Shakespeare's soul.

Then follow two tragedies whose action has nothing on earth to do with passion: the ingratitude of Lear's daughters has no connection with sex, and Timon's misanthropy is of generosity pushed to an extreme and not of desire.

The interest of these tragedies does not depend mainly on the portraiture of women, still the pictures of women in them throw light on the author's mental condition and the intense passion of both dramas is derived directly from Shakespeare's disappointments with his wanton mistress.

With that common sense which is the obverse of insight, Tolstoi has pointed out the faults in *Lear;* what a foolish old man was Lear, he says, not to have known his daughters better! It is just this foolish blindness which Shakespeare wishes to exaggerate in order to deepen for us the pathos of Lear's disproportionate punishment:

> . . . I am a man
> More sinned against than sinning.

I have been hotly criticized for speaking of the "erotic mania" which Shakespeare puts to view in *Lear.* But no milder words would render the intensity of my impression. Goneril and Regan are both wantons and both in heat for the base Edmund: Goneril in especial, by reason of her bold passion and resolution, reminds me of Lady Macbeth, and so at one remove recalls Shakespeare's dark mistress. She talks of her husband Albany, just as Lady Macbeth talked of her husband. Lady Macbeth said:

> Yet do I fear thy nature.
> It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
> To catch the nearest way.

And this Goneril speaks contemptuously of Albany's "milky gentleness," and declares that he will be:

> . . . more attask'd for want of wisdom
> Than praised for harmful mildness.

But it is not the unconditioned lechery of Goneril and Regan alone that gives *Lear* its character of erotic mania. Nearly every character in the play talks bawd on every possible occasion, though it has nothing to do with the action and is wholly out of keeping with the seriousness of the tragedy.

Edmund the villain begins by attacking man's hypocrisy in attributing his own faults to " planetary influence "—" an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! " Then the fool, who is the mere embodiment of common sense, loses no opportunity of showing the same bias: in the fifth scene of the first act he begins without provocation:

> She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure,
> Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

Edgar, too, who, as I have elsewhere shown, is another *alter ego* of Shakespeare himself, is almost as loose-lipped. He tells Lear he was a serving-man who " served the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her," and as if that were not enough, goes on to assert that he " out-paramoured the Turk," and

finally warns poor old Lear, of all men in the world, to keep his "foot out of brothels" and his "hand out of plackets." And silver-haired Lear himself, through whom Shakespeare speaks in the last acts as ingenuously as through Edgar, is obsessed with the same rank thoughts. When Gloucester asks:

Is't not the king?

Lear answers:

Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?
Adultery?
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
To't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers.
Behold yond simpering dame,
Whose face between her forks presageth snow;
That minces virtue, and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name;
The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to't
With a more riotous appetite.
Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
Though woman all above:
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiends';
There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulphurous pit,
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination. . . .

No wonder he begs for civet to sweeten his imagination. The whole subject is dragged in by the hair; it has nothing to do with his age or place or condition; in fact, it is out of tune with all three. And Lear's next speech is just as bad:

> Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
> Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;
> Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind
> For which thou whipp'st her. . . .

The truth is, his mistress's faithlessness has got on Shakespeare's nerves and his very thoughts are tainted with her wantonness: it is not his daughters' ingratitude that Lear-Shakespeare is thinking of any more than Hamlet was thinking of his mother's lechery, it is his faithless mistress who has infected the poet's imagination. Miss Fitton had got into Shakespeare's blood, and he lends Lear the very word for the obsession:

> . . . a disease that's in my flesh,
> Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
> A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle
> In my corrupted blood. . . .

As if to convince us that this explanation is the true one, and that Shakespeare is always thinking of his wanton-mistress, the fool tells us that " he's mad who trusts in the tameness of a wolf . . .

a boy's love, or a whore's oath." The italics are mine.

The tragedy of *Lear* is based upon Shakespeare's understanding of his insane, blind trust in men and women; but the intense passion of the play, as I must insist again, springs from erotic mania, and from the consciousness that he is growing too old for love's lists. Perhaps Shakespeare's imagination never carried him higher than when Lear appeals to the heavens because they, too, are old:

> . . . O heavens,
> If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
> Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
> Make it your cause.

Timon breeds new thoughts in me; it is a poor play, and yet it increases my admiration of Shakespeare's wisdom, and in proportion diminishes my already chastened opinion of his commentators.

The poets and professors are all agreed that "large tracts of *Timon* are not the work of Shakespeare." The critics by trade have mapped it out indeed, ascribing these lines to him and those to someone else. Long ago I found reason to attribute much more of it to Shakespeare than was generally believed. But

the incredible audacity of the professors, their unanimity, their serene conviction imposed on me; for years I believed that there must be some armature of truth to uphold the great jelly-like figure of assertion. I was first brought to doubt the teachers by the fact that in the very passages they all denied to Shakespeare, I found indubitable proof of his work. Time and a long experience of mandarin-methods have only strengthened and extended this belief.

The more I read *Timon* the more convinced I am that it is all Shakespeare's, and Shakespeare's alone, from beginning to end.

My readers, I think, will trust me now without proof; but as I go through the play selecting the most characteristic passages, I must just notice the fact that the very finest work is ascribed to the "unknown writer" by all the commentators. The curious thing is that the critics are unanimous in rejecting, not Shakespeare's vulgarities and inanities, but the gems of his thought, the rays of purest insight in him. *Timon* is all his, I say again deliberately. The weakest work in the play, the word disputes with Apemantus and others, are in his manner; the undramatic monotony of it is due to his exceeding bitterness of soul. For instance, Timon's gentlemen go to

borrow for their lord: when they're refused, instead of smiling at their own wisdom in finding expectancy fulfilled, they curse the ungrateful friends in Timon's own vein. Life has so bruised Shakespeare that he is one ache; his very soul is sore. Love and friendship, which he held most sacred, have betrayed him; his friend has proved a vulgar cad, his love a wanton. The gold which he has always tried to despise, he now sees is the master-key of every lock in the world:

> This yellow slave*
> Will knit and break religions; bless the accursed,
> Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves
> And give them title, knee and approbation
> With senators on the bench: this is it
> That makes the wapper'd widow wed again;
> She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores
> Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices
> To the April day again. . . .

The disillusion bred new wisdom in Shakespeare. Instead of patriotism he has condemnation now for all countries; Alcibiades generalizes the thought:

> 'Tis honour with most lands to be at odds.

* It is almost incredible, but this passage has been selected by Professor Herford as a specimen of the "unknown" collaborator's "facile rhetoric" and is contrasted with Shakespeare's "close-packed pregnant verses." (!)

Careless of character, Shakespeare lends his deepest ray of insight to a secondary person, the first Senator:

. . . . . .

He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer
The worst that man can breathe * and make his wrongs
His outsides, to wear them like his raiment carelessly
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
To bring it into danger.

But, like all the rest of us, Shakespeare's insight went further than his practice; he saw plainly that injuries should be taken lightly, but he could not help preferring them to his heart's health: *Timon* is one long moan of agony.

The nature of Timon-Shakespeare's suffering cannot be mistaken: it is his men friends who betray Timon, but it is the women Timon chiefly rails against, the women who in the play have

* This is another passage denied to Shakespeare by all the commentators. It is one of the furthest throws of his thought; the pearl which he found in the depths, when the bitter waters of disillusion had quite gone over him. It opens a new chapter in modern morality. "Forgive your enemies," said paganism, because fighting with them will waste your time and energy. "Forget your injuries," says Shakespeare. On no account nurse them. Brooding over wrongs hardens the heart and degrades the nature. Take your buffets lightly; wear your wrongs as you do your garments—carelessly, for your own sake. Shakespeare's commentators have not understood this, simply because they do not know him, are not on his level, and no man can see over his own head.

done him no wrong. It is outside the scope of the play to curse them; the only explanation is that it was a woman who in life wounded Shakespeare most deeply. Just as Goneril and Regan are painted as hard, cruel, lustful prostitutes, so Phrynia and Timandra are here caricatured as the refuse of humanity, without any desire except for gold.

The erotic mania of Lear shrills in Timon to a scream:

> . . . strike me the counterfeit matron,—
> It is her habit only that is honest,
> Herself's a bawd: let not the virgin's cheek
> Make soft thy trenchant sword. . . .

And again:

> Consumptions sow
> In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,
> And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,
> That he may never more false title plead,
> Nor sound his quillets shrilly: hoar the flamen,
> That scolds against the quality of flesh,
> And not believes himself: down with the nose,
> Down with it flat; take the bridge quite away
> Of him that, his particular to foresee,
> Smells from the general weal: make curl'd-pate ruffians bald;
> And let the unscarr'd braggarts of the war
> Derive some pain from you: plague all;
> That your activity may defeat and quell
> The source of all erection. . . .

His madness knows no distinction: "the damned earth" even is the

> . . . common whore of mankind,* that put'st odds
> Among the rout of nations . . .

But even in *Timon* Shakespeare shows himself impressionable-quick and most generous. As soon as Timon finds his steward honest, he throws off his misanthropy and cries:

> Forgive my general and exceptless rashness
> You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
> One honest man. . . .

This sharp return on himself with its superb expression is denied to Shakespeare by all commentators; yet there is nothing in all his works more characteristic.

These critics all suffer from Germanic stodginess. One instance may stand for a thousand. Shakespeare found two epitaphs attributed to Timon: one in which Timon declares he will be nameless, the other gives his name: both are characteristic:

> Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft:
> Seek not my name: a plague consume you wicked caitiffs left!
>
> . . . . . .

* This passage, too, is attributed to the "unknown writer" by the cry of critics.

Here lie I, Timon; who, alive, all living men did hate:
Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here
thy gait.

Shakespeare put both these epitaphs in, one after the other: he does not seem to have minded the contradiction in them: he probably saw it and intended to correct it, and then forgot all about it; but the commentators have buzzed about it ever since, and from this high and rank morsel have dragged infected feet over the whole play: "Two hands," they cry, "two hands plainly at work." Two hands if you will, gentlemen, but both manifestly Shakespeare's.

All through these five tragedies, except perhaps in *Othello,* we have been moving on the outskirts, so to speak, of the tornado of Shakespeare's passion. Now we come to the storm-centre. Shakespeare has been deceived again and again by the woman he loved: what picture does he paint of her? It is the question of questions for him and for us. By his answer we shall be able to measure his very soul. Tortured, cheated, betrayed, his vanity wounded to the quick, his affection scorned, the best in him despised;—if he can still keep his soul intact and render righteous judgment—paint her as she was, the good as well as the evil—then in him, on this

artist-side at least, and there is no higher, we touch the zenith of humanity.

He was able to reach this height about the false friend, Lord Herbert, who had stolen his love from him. Shakespeare pictures Herbert-Bertram for us very fairly; he shows us first Bertram's impatient eagerness to leave the court: the boy-fighter will not be a squire of dames, "the forehorse to a smock," as he himself puts it; he will risk the King's displeasure and go to the wars. And when in the field, he wins golden opinions on all sides: Diana even, who rejects his suit, tells us that "they say the French Count has done most honourable service," and the widow replies that he has "taken their greatest commander and with his own hand he slew the Duke's brother." Bertram, though young, is a born soldier of proved courage, as the English aristocrat often is.

True, Shakespeare puts in the shadows, purple-black shadows to balance these high lights: Bertram has a low opinion of women, is inexpressibly coarse and common, but we feel that the portrait of him is a fair one, astonishingly true to life in its mingled good and evil.

Was Shakespeare as fair to Mary Fitton? Bertram-Herbert, we know, betrayed him "in

the wanton way of youth." But why was Mary Fitton faithless? From what we know of Shakespeare we should be inclined to guess that he would ascribe Mary Fitton's preference of others to snobbishness. He will lay the flattering unction to his soul, we imagine, that she preferred Herbert because he was a lord of great place. But no! this is not even hinted. Manifestly Mary Fitton was well born enough, confident enough in herself and her superb womanhood, to judge all men, peers, and players alike, on the human level. She must have been a great creature; for not to be a snob in England is a rarer distinction than any title. The next disability that would occur to Shakespeare would naturally be his age. Mary Fitton is young, he might say, and therefore prefers young courtiers to old mummers. But his Othello expressly asks himself this question and answers it:

> . . . or for I am declined
> Into the vale of years—yet that's not much.

And in fact it was "not much"; for when Shakespeare first met Mistress Fitton, though she was only seventeen or eighteen, he was only thirty-three. It is true that when *Othello* was written the discrepancy showed worse: she was twenty-

four and he was nearly forty; still "that's not much" we are inclined to echo; though this harping on his age, indicates probably a certain physical weakness.

Why, then, did the maid of honour prefer this lord and that knight to Shakespeare, who adored her? Was the fault all Mary Fitton's? Was it all due to her sensuality? Shakespeare says so and the evidence against her at first blush seems overwhelming. At the very first sight of her as Rosaline in *Romeo and Juliet* he credits her with Dian's wit and cold chastity; but even this Rosaline, he notices, is not altogether obdurate and immediately afterwards, as Rosaline again in *Love's Labour's Lost,* he declares her to be a wanton:

> Ay, and by heaven, one that will do the deed
> Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard.

Again and again through Biron, Bertram, and others, he attributes to her this cunning outside of cold pride, gilding mere wantonness. The combination is so uncommon that it might alone serve to identify his mistress as readily as her white complexion and pitch-black eyes. But allowing Mary Fitton to have been as sensual as a monkey, she must still have had some preferences: does Shakespeare mark any? How does

he explain to himself his own conquest of her? Just before he met her he was always boasting, as we saw:

> That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
> If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.

Was it his honeyed flatteries seduced her or his handsome person or his devotion? Did she know that she was beloved by the greatest man in the world? Did she divine on his forehead the crown of crowns? Or was she too far below him to have any inkling of the truth, as Fanny Brawne was too far below Keats? Above all, why, loving her, did Shakespeare fail to hold her? We must now see if any or all of these riddles may be answered.

Whatever the answer may be, it must be looked for in his last portraits of his wonderful gipsy; in *Troilus and Cressida* and in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Before considering these plays let us first glance back over the way we have come.

CHAPTER X

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA: FALSE CRESSID—"THE HEART'S BLOOD OF BEAUTY;" LOVE'S INVISIBLE SOUL

WE have traced Shakespeare's love from its dawning in Rosaline and Juliet, through realistic portraits like that of Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost,* and idealistic sketches such as Julia, Portia, Beatrice, and Rosalind to its noontide in his passion for the "dark lady" of the sonnets.

Here at length he finally loses faith in his gypsy mistress and his love purged of trust and affection hardens to lust and shows itself in jealous rage in *Hamlet* and *Othello.* In *Lear* the jealousy has bred despair, and the despair shrills to madness and the more awful dread of madness: in *Timon* the ravings die gradually away in moans and cursings to the inevitable end.

Each of these tragedies marks a stage in Shakespeare's agony: we can trace his descent to the ultimate of human suffering by the stains of his

bleeding feet on the flints and thorns of the rough way. After *Timon* there is no more to be said. But the rhythm of life is never so symmetrical-perfect as the rhythm of art. When Shakespeare wrote *Lear* and *Timon,* he tasted the very bitterness of despair and death: his dark mistress had probably drawn away from him completely in some new infatuation; but a little later, when he wrote *Troilus and Cressida* and *Antony and Cleopatra,* the sky had grown lighter again and the sun shone through the clouds. *Antony and Cleopatra* is evidence sufficient that his mistress had been kind to him; it is the St. Martin's summer, so to speak, of his passion: the warmth and sunshine and ecstasy of joy are in it.

This irregular rhythm of life is more pathetic than the inevitable parabola of art. If Shakespeare had gone steadily down to despair from the sonnets, through *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* to *Lear* and *Timon,* we should not have been so moved as by the exquisitely sharp renascence to life and love in *Troilus and Cressida* which is followed by the exultant passion of *Antony and Cleopatra,* where the flowers bloom again in the sunny warmth, and the love-birds sing before the final desolation.

These two plays contain Shakespeare's fin-

est portraits of his great mistress. *Troilus and Cressida* was probably revised as late as 1605-6: I have given my reasons elsewhere for thinking the revision an earlier work than *Antony and Cleopatra.* With the exception of *Timon, Troilus and Cressida* is the harshest play Shakespeare ever wrote: it is steeped in contempt for poor humanity. I have found in the poet's life the explanation of this intensified misery. Not only is he suffering almost past hope from the unfaith of his gypsy-wanton, but he has been plagued by the rivalry of the poet Chapman, whom he describes with exquisite insight in the sonnets as something of a pedant. Chapman translated Homer and glorified the Greeks: Shakespeare therefore jeers at the " war for a placket " . . . " all the argument," he tells us, " is a cuckold and a whore "; he makes Achilles a cowardly ruffian and " the king of men " a mouthing imbecile; he will not even leave us the ideal picture of Hector and Andromache: Hector challenges Ajax and then withdraws from the fight out of regard for the blood of his " sacred aunt " which flows in Ajax's veins.

As I have said elsewhere, no one was ever better fitted to appreciate the grace of Greece and the magic of Greek plastic art than Shakespeare;

had he possessed Jonson's knowledge of the language, he would have left us divine pictures of Greek life. But Chapman had made up to Herbert, and his pedantry and overpraised Homer had got upon Shakespeare's nerves, who now spewed out his contempt of his rival's classical learning in *Timon* and in *Troilus and Cressida.*

It may be possible to get nearer to Shakespeare's life than this while showing how his personal experiences affected even his mature art. We know a good deal about the bitter quarrel between Ben Jonson on the one side and Dekker and Marston on the other; it seems probable that Shakespeare when creating Ajax made the character life-like and recognizable by lending the stout Grecian some of Ben Jonson's peculiarities; and perhaps "rank" Thersites shows Shakespeare's judgment of Dekker.

Here is the portrait of Ajax put in the mouth of Alexander:

"This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant: a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any

man an attaint but he carries some strain of it; he is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair: he hath the joints of everything, but everything so out of joint that he is gouty Briareus, many hands and no use; or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight. . . ."

This is too precise portraiture for an historical figure; it is evident that Shakespeare had some contemporary in mind when he thus individualized Ajax. I cannot but think he was glancing at Ben Jonson, his constant and not always fair critic, in this astonishingly realistic description. That " gouty Briareus " is poisonously clever and the " purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight " flicks the raw spot with consummate skill. It looks to me as if Shakespeare were paying off old scores in thus ridiculing his critics; his caricature of Jonson is on the whole good-humoured and extremely effective, whereas his opinion of Dekker, who was supposed to be his partisan, is sharpened by contemptuous aversion. Nothing gives a better idea of Shakespeare's extraordinary insight than these disdainful glances at his contemporaries. They had not made life very pleasant to him, as we know; he retorts by showing the clumsiness and ineptitude which disfigured Jonson's strength and the foulness which prevented the gutter-mind

of Dekker from rendering a fair reflection of earth and sky. But even here while giving play to keen eyes, he judges with imperial fairness: his friends fare worse at his hands than his opponents.

The main current of the poet's bitterness in *Troilus and Cressida* as in all his other tragedies flows from his disappointed and defiled love. At length he has found his opportunity: ten years have passed since he first sketched his proud witty wanton mistress for us as Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost;* now he will give us another realistic portrait of her; but this time he will not merely tell us she's "a light girl" with black eyes, he'll show her in act; she shall live for us and play the old game before our eyes. By this time Shakespeare had come to realize, I imagine, that his passion was extraordinary and noteworthy and of purpose and with self-conscious art he set to work to paint it.

The physical traits which identify Cressida with Rosaline and the "dark lady" of the sonnets are at first slight; mere indications in fact; and only to be thus construed because they are wholly unnecessary in the play.

The tragedy opens with the dialogue between Troilus and Cressida's uncle Pandar. Troilus

begins by talking in Shakespeare's very strain of the " cruel war* here within " himself: he goes on:

> . . . I am weaker than a woman's tear,
> Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance. . . .

In just the same strain Hamlet lamented his tameness; he lacked " gall to make oppression bitter "; but this " fonder than ignorance " is Shakespeare's later confession.

Pandar praises Cressida's beauty: " An her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's—well, go to—there were no more comparison between the women . . . I would not . . . praise her . . . but I would somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as I did. I will not dispraise your sister Cassandra's wit, but . . ."

A little later he babbles again:

> I care not an she were a black-a-moor; 'tis all one to me.

The identity is unmistakable; Cressida is a dark beauty with astonishing wit; every touch is of Shakespeare's cunning mistress Rosaline-Fitton: Troilus cries like Romeo:

> She is stubborn-chaste against all suit.

* In *Julius Cæsar*, Brutus, another incarnation of Shakespeare, talked of being " with himself at war."

Then Cressida is introduced to talk about Troilus: while Pandar praises him she runs him down, till Pandar gets annoyed:

> One knows not at what ward you lie.

At once this stubborn-chaste Cressida replies: "Upon my back to defend my belly; upon my wit to defend my wiles; upon my secrecy to defend mine honesty" and so on, more and more lewdly. When Pandar is going away she calls him "a bawd," and this is how this virgin talks to herself:

> But more in Troilus thousand-fold I see
> Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be;
> Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing:
> Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.
> That she beloved knows nought that knows not this:
> Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is:
> That she was never yet that ever knew
> Love got so sweet as when desire did sue. . . .

This is manifestly the same woman whom Bertram described to us in *All's Well* with her pretended "restraint," "infinite cunning," and self-abandonment, and whom Antony is about to describe as "cunning past men's thought": this is the "whitely wanton," Rosaline, who loved to fence with words—the lewder the better. No virgin ever had this science of Cressida.

We do not see Cressida again till Pandar in the third act brings her to Troilus in the orchard: Shakespeare has painted the love-scene for us more lusciously than love-scene was ever painted before or since.

What a fascination his mistress must have had for him to enable him after years of intimacy to realize this recrudescence of passion with such throbbing intensity! His mouthpiece, Troilus, cries:

> I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
> The imaginary relish is so sweet
> That it enchants my sense: what will it be,
> When that the watery palate tastes indeed
> Love's thrice repured nectar? *death, I fear me,*
> *Swounding destruction, or some joy too fine,*
> *Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness*
> *For the capacity of my ruder powers:*
> *I fear it much;** and I do fear besides,
> That I shall lose distinction in my joys;
> As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps
> The enemy flying.

* The italics are mine. This is the supremest utterance of passion in all Shakespeare. This fear that the intensity of the emotion will lame the "ruder powers" of the body can only be felt in a man's love for a woman. In her love for Bassanio Portia fears the "too much" of the emotion, but naturally without any reference to the body. In Sonnet 23, which I have already described as the only cry of passion addressed to the youth in any writing of Shakespeare, we are confronted with the same overpowering desire and the same dread: now what should we infer from this? Only one deduction, it seems

Pandar, too, describes Cressida in much the same way:

> She's making her ready, she'll come straight:
> . . . She does so blush. . . . It is the prettiest villain: she fetches her breath as short as a new ta'en sparrow.
> TRO. Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom:
> My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse. . . .

The lovers' talk at first is nothing wonderful —all hesitation on her part and admiration on his. But Cressida is the first to end the fencing. I must transcribe a page. Shakespeare has written nothing finer, nothing truer:

> CRES. Boldness comes to me now, and brings me heart.
> Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day
> For many weary months.
> TRO. Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?
> CRES. Hard to seem won: but I was won, my lord,
> With the first glance that ever—pardon me—
> If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.
> I love you now; but not till now, so much
> But I might master it: in faith I lie;

to me, is possible. This nervous fear lest the very force of desire should mar the performance is manifestly borrowed from Shakespeare's desire for his mistress; it is utterly affected and insincere when addressed to the youth. Just in the same way Shakespeare pictures Venus begging Adonis again and again not to let his beauty die without leaving children to inherit it, and then addresses the same prayer to his man-friend in the first eighteen sonnets, where from a man to a man the prayer is wholly out of place and insincere.

My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown
Too headstrong for their mother. See we fools!
Why have I blabb'd? who shall be true to us,
When we are so unsecret to ourselves?
But, though I loved you well, I woo'd you not:
And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,
Or that we women had men's privilege
Of speaking first. . . .

Then she will go away:

. . . I know not what I speak.

TRO. Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely.

CRES. Perchance my lord, I show more craft* than love:
And fell so roundly to a large confession,
To angle for your thoughts: but you are wise,
Or else you love not, for to be wise and love
Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above. . . .

The last two lines are plainly Shakespeare's own reflection. Troilus answers Cressida in a way which shows the disillusion of all Shakespeare's desperate hopes; for why should young Troilus not believe his love? The whole passage is an intimate confession, and in the last two lines Shakespeare again laments that his simple con-

* This reminds me of Juliet's declaration, and serves to show how far Shakespeare has travelled in knowledge of his mistress in the ten or twelve years:

But trust me, gentlemen, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.

Constancy is at a disadvantage with his mistress's opalescent changes of fancy:

> O that I thought it could be in a woman—
> As, if it can, I will presume in you—
> To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;
> To keep her constancy in plight and youth,
> Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind
> That doth renew swifter than blood decays!
> Or that persuasion could but thus convince me,
> That my integrity and truth to you
> Might be affronted with the match and weight
> Of such a winnow'd purity in love;
> How were I then uplifted! but, alas!
> I am as true as truth's simplicity
> And simpler than the infancy of truth. . . .

The next morning Cressida is as charming-frank as Juliet: ". . Night hath been too brief," she says, and Troilus, like Romeo, wishes that " the busy day had not been wakened by the lark."

A few minutes afterwards when Cressida is told that she will have to leave Troilus she swears that she will " not go from Troy "; she will not even hear of moderation in her grief.

> The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,
> And violenteth in a sense as strong
> As that which causeth it: how can I moderate it?

She will be a " woful Cressid 'mongst the merry Greeks." And then this Troilus though only a youth speaks again with the insight of dis-

illusioned Shakespeare: he doubts Cressida's truth and his own merit. The whole passage deserves to be weighed word by word though space forbids me to transcribe more than a part of it: he says to his mistress:

> . . . I do not call your faith in question
> So mainly as my merit: I cannot sing,
> Nor heel the high lavolt, nor sweeten talk
> Nor play at subtle games; fair virtues all.
> To which the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant:
> But I can tell that in each grace of these
> There lurks a still and dumb-discoursive devil
> That tempts most cunningly: but be not tempted.
> CRES. Do you think I will?
> TRO. No.
> *But something may be done that we will not.*

I have put this last line in italics and shall return to it again.

Then we have the terrible scene in the fifth act in which Cressida angles for Diomedes, just as she aforetime angled for Troilus. Ulysses and Troilus witness the whole scene. She begins with a beseeching which in itself is a confession:

> Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly.

She then pretends coyness, and Diomedes bids her good night, "I'll be your fool no more." Troilus-Shakespeare's comment is astonishing:

> Thy better must.

Then she strokes Diomedes' cheek and he asks a token from her for surety. She gives him the very sleeve which Troilus had given her. When they say "good night" she reminds Diomedes of his promise with "I prithee, come," and talks to herself in this way:

> Troilus, farewell! one eye yet looks on thee;
> But with my heart the other eye doth see.
> Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,
> The error of our eye directs our mind: . . .

The first two lines though weak are important to us: the two last of course are Shakespeare's comment.

After this it is no wonder that Ulysses wants to go:

> Why stay we then?

Troilus-Shakespeare answers:

> To make a recordation to my soul
> Of every syllable that here was spoke. . . .

There is a famous sonnet in which Shakespeare warns his dark mistress not to be faithless before his very eyes, for that may push him to madness and revenge. I have often wondered what she said or did to Herbert before Shakespeare's eyes to have wrung that wild threat from her gentle poet-lover. And when I read this scene in *Troi-*

lus and Cressida I feel that Shakespeare had either seen his mistress betray him or listened to her while she was giving herself. Those words of Troilus ring in my brain:

> To make a recordation to my soul
> Of every syllable that here was spoke.

We have seen long ago that it was a trick of Shakespeare when intensely moved to coin a new word or word-form; his exquisite sensibility always invented a new symbol. The word " recordation " is a confession to me.

There is no reason given for Cressida's unfaithfulness. She was as loose as a wanton boy; folly tempted her: Greek and Trojan alike were honey to her and all hours of day and night appropriate.

At first sight of her Ulysses, who is the wisdom of the play, condemns her, as Shakespeare got the Abbess in *The Comedy of Errors* to condemn his jealous wife Adriana. I hear Shakespeare's severe ethical judgment of his mistress in every word:

> . . . Fie, fie upon her!
> There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
> Nay her foot speaks; her wanton spirit looks out
> At every joint and motive of her body.
> O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
> That give accosting welcome ere it comes,

> And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
> To every ticklish reader! set them down
> For sluttish spoils of opportunity
> And daughters of the game. . . .

And yet though her falseness is seen so clearly and cursed so bitterly, she is not punished in any way.

Before I leave this drama I must go back one moment to the warning of Troilus, which I marked in italics. Troilus tells Cressida "something may be done that we will not": the Grecians, he says, can "play at subtle games." Now what are these "subtle games" of love that "tempt most cunningly"? We noticed just the same insinuation in the words of Parolles about Bertram-Herbert in *All's Well.* In Act v. 3, Parolles says that he knew of a promise of marriage by Bertram *and things which would derive me ill-will to speak of;* Herbert then had done even worse than promise marriage. Shakespeare wants to leave us with the impression that his mistress was so given to the pleasures of sense that the most subtle and cunning sensualist among her lovers would have the greatest influence over her. He wishes to suggest that Mary Fitton preferred Herbert and others to himself because they practised "subtle" games of love which he

would not condescend to use. The accusation was probably true, though I doubt the implied superiority.

Shakespeare then allows Cressida to assure us that she has always one eye on Troilus-Shakespeare, even when the other is on Diomedes or her newest fancy. That is the truth I imagine. Her love of Shakespeare is the single redeeming trait in Cressida-Fitton; otherwise she is as loose as she was ten years before in 1597 when we first met her as Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost.*

There is no picture in all literature of so delightful and frank a wanton as Shakespeare's Cressida; she is almost too soulless "a daughter of the game" * to be human—"the sluttish sport of opportunity." But there must have been something more in Shakespeare's gypsy mistress than wiles and wantonness. We know from the sonnets that there was might and boldness of personality in her; but was there nothing else? We shall soon see.

* Shakespeare really made this English language of ours just as Dante made Italian and Luther German: the phrase of the prostitute to-day on the streets of London is: "I'm on the game."

CHAPTER XI

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA: CLEOPATRA-FITTON: "WITCHERY JOINS WITH BEAUTY, LUST WITH BOTH!"

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA is Shakespeare's masterpiece of passion; in it he gives us the greatest woman-portrait ever painted; here at length we shall see his wanton mistress at her best queening it imperially.

The whole interest of this long play is concentrated on Antony and on Cleopatra. Antony is talked of by the professors as "a supreme poetical creation . . . as unique as Hamlet," and we may assume before proof that Shakespeare will identify himself with the lover, Antony; but a little doubt of the perfectness of the portraiture must remain in us; for Antony was a great captain and fighter. Even in Plutarch his qualities as a man of action are only obscured by his passion for Cleopatra; she "quenched the goodness . . . and the hope of rising in him . . . and stirred up many vices"; but first and last he was

a great soldier. Gentle sensitive Shakespeare we may be sure, with his Hamlet-like poetic nature, will depict the lover for us to the life; but how will he render the captain?

Plutarch has not given him much help: he, too, has taken the leader of men for granted, and Shakespeare finds no magic in himself to better his model. In this drama Antony lives for us as a lover, a generous, forgiving poet-lover, but nothing more. *Antony and Cleopatra* is even more of a lyric, a lust-lyric it is true, than *Romeo and Juliet.* The character of Antony is only obscured for us by the soldierly achievements which Shakespeare following Plutarch attributes to him. "The triple pillar of the world" has no kinship for Shakespeare, no attraction even till he is "transform'd into a strumpet's fool." Hamlet-Shakespeare is here in a *rôle* only partially suited to him and consequently Antony is not one of Shakespeare's best character pictures.

But under the thin armour, so to speak, of the Roman general, Shakespeare paints himself for us to the life. This Antony-Shakespeare can be distinguished easily in almost every scene. Now and then indeed certain qualities of Shakespeare come to more superb and perfect expression in Antony than in any other of the dramatist's he-

roes, for Shakespeare's skill of hand increased to the end.

I have called Shakespeare the ideal lover with the best tongue in the world. Listen to him in the first scene of the first act:

CLEO. If it be love indeed, tell me how much.
ANT. There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.
CLEO. I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.
ANT. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

The great wings of the poet's passion beat in the superb phrase. In the very first act Antony sees with Shakespeare's clearness of vision that he must break these "strong Egyptian fetters" or "lose himself in dotage"; but he is not strong enough to carry his insight to act. Shakespeare marks in Antony his own understanding that all remorse is pernicious:

Things that are past are done with me.

Antony, too, gives explicit and reiterated expression to that love of truth, at all costs, which was the sign at once and pole-star of Shakespeare's intelligence:

Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death,
I hear him as he flatter'd. . . .

Again this Shakespeare-Antony cries:

Speak to me home, mince not the general tongue;
Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome;
Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase, and taunt my faults
With such full license as both truth and malice
Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds,
When our quick minds lie still, and our ills told us
Is as our earing . .

To hear of our faults, Shakespeare says, is as the ploughing and fecundating of the mind: at forty-four he was still young in spirit.

The dignity, too, with which Antony confesses his fault to Cæsar and himself pronounces absolution, is finely characteristic of Shakespeare's intellectual pride.

Cleopatra's belief, however, that Antony was "the greatest soldier of the world" does not convince us; nor Pompey's statement that his "soldiership is twice the other twain . . ." We are rather inclined to credit Shakespeare himself when he tells us through Cæsar that Shakespeare-Antony is child-like in maturity and will "pawn his experience to present pleasure." That is the judgment of the intellect on the artist-lover.

When his insensate passion has brought him to ruin this Antony-Shakespeare naturally reaches supreme utterance. As soon as he is defeated the old phrase rises to his lips:

> I am so lated in the world, that I
> Have lost my way for ever: . . .

It might be Richard II speaking or Hamlet, or any other of Shakespeare's incarnations; and this Antony has a ship laden with gold to bestow upon his friends.

When Cleopatra comes to beg forgiveness for betraying him, he must put his fault on her; but when Enobarbus—who is the intellectual conscience, so to speak, of the play—is asked who is in fault, he tells the simple truth:

> Antony only, that would make his will
> Lord of his reason . . .

In spite of this condemnation, Shakespeare having Mary Fitton in mind persists in making Antony blame Cleopatra, though this feminine railing is an unnecessary weakness in Antony.

> . . . whither hast thou led me, Egypt?

he cries, and again in words that are from Shakespeare's very soul:

> . . . Egypt, thou knew'st too well
> My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
> And thou shouldst tow me after: o'er my spirit
> Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that
> Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods
> Command me.

His gypsy queen begs again for pardon, and he gives it in a quick change of mood most generously:

> Fall not a tear, I say: one of them rates
> All that is won and lost: give me a kiss;
> Even this repays me. . . .
> . . . Fortune knows
> We scorn her most when most she offers blows

But when a little later he finds her allowing Cæsar's messenger, Thyreus, to kiss her hand he rages against her, as we have seen Shakespeare raging again and again in half a dozen different tragedies against Mary Fitton; though here probably his reproaches are bolder than he ever dared use to his great mistress's face:

> You have been a boggler ever:
> But when we in our viciousness grow hard—
> O misery on't!—the wise gods seel our eyes;
> In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us
> Adore our errors; laugh at's, while we strut
> To our confusion.
> CLEO. O, is't come to this?
> ANT. I found you as a morsel cold upon
> Dead Cæsar's trencher; nay, you were a fragment
> Of Cneius Pompey's; besides what hotter hours,
> Unregister'd in vulgar fame, you have
> Luxuriously pick'd out: for I am sure,
> Though you can guess what temperance should be
> You know not what it is. . . .
> . . . . . .

O, that I were
Upon the hill of Basan, to outroar
The horned herd! for I have savage cause.
. . . . . .

This is the truth about Mary Fitton at last: she did not know what temperance was in her love of luxurious hot hours. But all this raving insane jealousy with its "savage cause" is only the obverse of the man's intense desire. He soon forgives her; calls her "my heart" and cries:

. . . Come
Let's have one other gaudy night: . . .

This Antony-Shakespeare who has lost everything including honour yet in his abandonment finds treasure in the richness of his soul. When he hears that Enobarbus has left him, he sends his money after him with nobly generous Shakespeare words:

Go, Eros, send his treasure after; do it;
Detain no jot, I charge thee: write to him—
I will subscribe—gentle adieux and greetings;
Say that I wish he never find more cause
To change a master. O, my fortunes have
Corrupted honest men! . .

Surely this is the gentlest, wisest soul that ever revealed its sweetness in literature.

Betrayed again by Cleopatra, Antony finds supreme expression for his love and for his contempt:

> . . . Betray'd I am:
> O, this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm
> Whose eye beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home;
> Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end—
> Like a right gipsy, hath at fast and loose,
> Beguiled me to the very heart of loss . . .

As soon as Antony, the lover, hears that Cleopatra is dead he closes the sweet-scented book of life and follows eagerly:

> Unarm, Eros: the long day's task is done,
> And we must sleep . . .

His passion for his gypsy-wanton holds to the end:

> . . . . . .
> I here importune death awhile, until
> Of many thousand kisses the poor last
> I lay upon thy lips.

I have given a little more space to Antony's character than becomes the purpose of these articles because Shakespeare never revealed the intense desire that burned in him throughout his whole mature life so completely as in this Antony. But the Roman general's armour does not suit

Shakespeare, and so Antony's very last words, though true enough to the Roman, are not true to the poet:

. . . . . .

I lived the greatest prince o' the world
The noblest, and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman, a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquished. Now my spirit is going;
I can no more.

Shakespeare himself is not satisfied with this summing up: he puts the true word for himself as the supreme creative artist in the mouth of Cæsar's friend Agrippa:

. . . A rarer spirit never
Did steer humanity: but you, gods, will give us
Some faults to make us men. . . .

But if Shakespeare is not perfectly at home in the stiff armour of the Roman general, if his passion is too poetic, his generosities and nobilities too unlimited and too lavish; his superb mistress, Mary Fitton finds at length in Cleopatra a part that suits her to perfection. All great craftsmen are helped now and then by chance or by the hap of lucky hours to some masterpiece beyond their imagining. More than any other artist, partly by reason of his ever-welling sympathy, partly be-

cause of his tireless industry, Shakespeare was blessed with these favours of fitful fortune. We have seen in *Romeo and Juliet* how his weaknesses were complemented by the realistic features supplied to him by his forerunner Brooke in the portrait of the garrulous venal old Nurse; so here his desire to strip and flay his mistress as he did in Cressida is complemented by the fact that Cleopatra did at length rise to unselfish greatness, and take her own life. She may have killed herself out of pride to avoid being dragged as a show in Cæsar's triumph or out of love for Antony, or both motives may have swayed her; but she did commit self-murder and that redeems her for us, lends her that soul of greatness if not of goodness which makes us forgive the wanton blood because of the immortal longings which lifted her to tragic heights.

I have analyzed Cleopatra's character carefully and fully in my book *The Man Shakespeare;* yet the character-painting is so rich that I am delighted to show the extraordinary picture again in a new and perhaps a more favourable light.

Two groups of qualities in Mary Fitton seem to have struck Shakespeare almost from the beginning; her cunning pretence of coldness gilding utter wantonness, and her dominant person-

ality armed with quick wit and quicker temper. While giving all these peculiar qualities to her in all his better portraits he usually lays stress upon the one set rather than the other. For instance, in Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost* he brings out her cool aloofness and wantonness and wit: in Cressida we have a more intense Rosaline: her faithlessness is shown to us in act; she confesses that her coldness is only a pretence used to quicken the desires of her lover. On the other hand, in the "dark lady" of the sonnets Shakespeare has emphasized the domineering strength of his mistress's personality; vices in her become beauties, he tells us; and in Cleopatra this strength of personality is insisted upon again and complicated with cajoleries and quick wit and hot temper. This magic of personality and high-spirited witty boldness were clearly the qualities Shakespeare most admired in his mistress, just as the cunning wiles and wantonness were the "foul faults" he raves against in both sonnets and plays. When he wrote *Troilus and Cressida,* there had been a rebirth of passion between them and probably a new betrayal. Before he wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* he had enjoyed an Indian summer of delight. For one peculiarity of Shakespeare seems to be that working as he did

with extraordinary constancy his experiences of every year or even of every month tinged and coloured his art. His plays and poems thus become documents of a singular and intimate self-revealing—windows, so to speak, through which we can follow his soul's adventures.

The very first scene of *Antony and Cleopatra* shows that Shakespeare's love is happy and in full flood. As his continual disappointments have embittered him he needs happiness in order to give us at all a fair picture of his mistress; even at his best now he is likely to err by making the shadows too heavy. The joy in the play then is a good omen. At the very beginning Cleopatra teases Antony jealously; messengers from Rome are announced, and she cries, "Fulvia perchance is angry," or "Young Cæsar may have sent his 'powerful mandate' to you." Antony will not listen but strikes the key-note which we hear again at the end of the drama; he and his love are a pair without peer in the world; of that at least Shakespeare was certain.

"Stirr'd by Cleopatra" with jibes and jealousy Antony will give himself to "love of Love and her soft hours."

But Cleopatra taunts him:

Hear the ambassadors.

He replies:

> . . . Fie, wrangling queen!
> Whom everything becomes, to chide, to laugh,
> To weep, whose every passion fully strives
> To make itself, in thee, fair and admired!

Shakespeare used precisely the same words to his "dark lady" of the sonnets, in Sonnet 150:

> Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill
> That in the very refuse of thy deeds
> There is such strength and warranties of skill
> That in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds? . . .

As if to impress the strange fact upon us Enobarbus sings of Cleopatra to the same tune:

> . . . vilest things
> Become themselves in her. . . .

Her jealousy is then wonderfully rendered again:

Fulvia's death is announced, and Antony is resolved as Shakespeare no doubt resolved a thousand times:

> I must from this enchanting queen break off:
> Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
> My idleness doth hatch. . . .

But Enobarbus tells him that:

> Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this, dies instantly:
> I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment. . . .
> ANT. She is cunning past man's thought.

Enobarbus will not have it. He sees more clearly: I call him the conscience of the play, the embodiment of Shakespeare's judgment. He says:

> Alack, sir, no; her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love: . . .
> ANT. Would I had never seen her! . . .

But Shakespeare's impartial intellect will not accept that lame and ill-tempered conclusion. Enobarbus replies:

> O, sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work; which not to have been blest withal would have discredited your travel.

Cleopatra paints herself again for us to the life in the next scene: her thought is all of Antony:

> CLEO. Where is he?
> CHAR. I did not see him since.
> CLEO. See where he is, who's with him, what he does:
> I did not send you: if you find him sad,
> Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report
> That I am sudden sick: quick and return.

She is a feather tossed on the wind of passion. She teases, jibes, and is jealous—all from intense love. When she sees that Antony intends to leave her, she changes at once to tender flattery

and good wishes; for she is intent on winning him back again:

> And all the gods go with you! upon your sword
> Sit laurel victory! . . .

Even when Antony is absent her thoughts are all of him. The scene with the eunuch, Mardian, is a masterpiece incomparable—a perfect cameo.

She goes on to quarrel with Charmian for comparing Cæsar with Antony, her "man of men." She only loved Cæsar in:

> My salad days,
> When I was green in judgment: cold in blood . . .

She feeds herself with thoughts of Antony, as "with most delicious poison."

In her:

> . . . witchcraft joins with beauty, lust with both! . . .

In this first act Cleopatra is already painted to the life with such ease, mastery, and consummate *brio,* as no other dramatist or even novelist has ever displayed. Shakespeare had been in love with Mary Fitton for years. She had got into his blood, and he could not but paint her for us in act after act, in a dozen differing moods.

Even Shakespeare's intellectual conscience Enobarbus cannot control himself when he speaks of her:

I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street;
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted
That she did make defect perfection
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

This incident seems to me a veritable performance of Mary Fitton reported by Shakespeare. It must have made a deathless impression on him. Not only does it throw Enobarbus off his perfect balance; but it is in itself too peculiar to be imagined and is besides not at all in keeping with the character of the sensual queen. It reminds us too directly of the bold sonnet-heroine. That insistence upon "power" strikes the same note as in Sonnet 150:

O from what power hast thou this powerful might . . . ?

In the fifth scene of the second act Cleopatra is painted for us again to the finger-tips. She begins by asking for music:

. . . moody food,
Of us that trade in love. . . .

Then come memories of Antony:

I laugh'd him out of patience; and that night
I laugh'd him into patience; and next morn
Ere the ninth hour, I drank him to his bed;
Then put my tires and mantle on him, whilst
I wore his sword Philippan. . . .

That any woman could drink Antony to bed would astonish us, but Shakespeare we know had "very poor and unhappy brains for drinking." Still the dressing up of Antony, while soft Cleopatra struts about with a sword, realizes the whole scene for us to admiration.

A messenger comes from Italy, and she cries with astounding sensuality:

> Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in my ears,
> That long time hath been barren.

If good news there is gold for him:

> . . . and here
> My bluest veins to kiss . . .

—the woman-temptress to perfection.

She is anxious; has a mind to strike him ere he speaks. When she hears that Antony is married, she is lost in anger: she strikes the messenger and hales him up and down the room by the hair; will kill him: then the revulsion of the high-bred woman:

> These hands do lack nobility, that they strike
> A meaner than myself. . . .

She must know "the feature of Octavia . . . her years . . . her inclination . . . the colour

of her hair" and in especial "how tall she is." Was there ever such portrait-painting! Every touch in place and finished like a miniature. The image is so precise that Shakespeare's mistress moves across the canvas before our eyes.

The important feature is repeated. In the next scene, an act later, Cleopatra is introduced with the messenger again, and the first question is:

> Cleo. Is she as tall as me?
> Mes. She is not, madam;

but the messenger says "she is low-voiced." Cleopatra admits "that's not so good," but immediately turns the man's praise to blame. To her Octavia is "dull of tongue and dwarfish." When she hears that her rival's face is "round even to faultiness," she decides that

> For the most part, too, they are foolish that are so.
> Her hair what colour?
> Mes. Brown, madam; and her forehead
> As low as she would wish it.

At once she gives him gold, finds him most fit for business.

Here, as in another far earlier portrait, we learn that Mary Fitton's forehead was high and her face rather oval than round.

Then comes the catastrophe. Enobarbus will have Antony fight on land, but Cleopatra wants him to fight on sea:

> I have sixty sails, Cæsar none better.

In the fight she flies; he follows and

> The greater cantle of the world is lost.

Of course she begs pardon of Antony and gets it.

Then comes the scene in which she gives her hand to Thyreus, Cæsar's messenger, to kiss: tell Cæsar, she says,

> . . . I am prompt,
> To lay my crown at's feet, and there to kneel . . .

This quick change, as I have said elsewhere, is out of tune with the play and unnecessary. It is true to Cressida, no doubt; true to Shakespeare's mistress, probably, but not true to Cleopatra. Cleopatra does not trust herself to Cæsar, but to death. It is unnecessary too, because Shakespeare is going to reveal all her worst to us in the scene with her treasurer who proves that she has concealed the greater part of her wealth. The shadows are already dark enough.

It is, as I have said, the historical fact that Cleopatra kills herself, which forces Shakespeare

to do justice to his splendid mistress. Antony may curse her as a " triple-turn'd whore," who

> . . . at fast and loose,
> Beguiled me to the very heart of loss.

But it is not true. Cleopatra is merely a very sensuous woman who at the crisis loses nerve and fear-driven flies to the tower as she fled from Actium. But Antony is all the world to her, and when he dies she declares, or Shakespeare with a contemptuous allusion to Herbert declares—for no woman and especially no old wanton feels contempt of youth:

> . . . young boys and girls
> Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
> And there is nothing left remarkable
> Beneath the visiting moon.

The last scenes are the finest of all. Cleopatra says to Iras:

> My desolation does begin to make
> A better life . . .

This great artist in duplicity is not to be cheated: she distrusts Cæsar:

> . . . girls, he words me, that I should not
> Be noble to myself: . . .

She will not grace his triumph, nor be " chastised with the sober eye of dull Octavia . . ." she has

" immortal longings " in her and at the supreme hour the high temper of Shakespeare's mistress breaks into mocking: she wants to hear the asp " call great Cæsar, ass unpolicied! "

Aristotle has been excessively praised because in his " Poetics " he tells us how the pity and fear of a great tragedy should always lead to a " katharsis " or purification; perhaps the better phrase would be to something consoling—a reconciliation. Aristotle drew his theories from Sophocles, and Shakespeare with a still finer sense of fitness than the Greek poet recognized the same necessity. He always gives to his favourite characters some final word of appreciation, which may reconcile us to some extent to their unhappy fate. Hamlet at the end is called a " noble heart "; Brutus was " the noblest Roman of them all "; Othello was " great of heart," and so now at the end I look for the supreme word about Cleopatra-Fitton. I confess I have in mind that " modern grace " which even the bitter Bertram-Herbert admitted in her; and I am delighted to find that Shakespeare has given the self-same word to the cold Cæsar. He says:

> . . . she looks like sleep
> As she would catch another Antony,
> In her strong toil of grace.

It is Cæsar again who pronounces the supreme valediction upon the lovers in which Antony's words at the beginning of the drama are re-echoed:

> No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
> A pair so famous . . .

What a pity it is that Shakespeare and Mary Fitton do not sleep together in the great Abbey!

In this picture of Cleopatra we have by far the finest and most complex portrait of Shakespeare's mistress; we even learn some new physical features from it; she was tall with a high forehead, and oval rather than round face. Lofty stature suits the superb gypsy-wanton with her white skin and pitch-black eyes and hair. Two or three mental traits, too, are here given her that are omitted or only suggested in the other character sketches. In spite of the " siren tears " we read about in the sonnets, in the dramatic presentations Shakespeare's mistress does not weep; but here she uses that weakness; she goes further, she even dies frequently, Enobarbus says, in order to subdue her lover: no wonder Antony-Shakespeare declares " she's cunning past man's thought." Here, too, her passionate love is displayed while her wantonness is almost left out of

sight: on the other hand, her high courage and contempt of death are as an aureole to her—a most astonishing, veracious, gaudy portrait I call it, the finest beyond compare in all literature, worthy to stand with Hamlet and with Falstaff for ever. So much his passionate love did for Shakespeare and for us.

CHAPTER XII

CORIOLANUS: VOLUMNIA, THE PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE'S MOTHER

BEFORE I consider his last four or five dramas or "romances" as they have been aptly called, I must glance at a play which was written just before his breakdown. *Coriolanus* is an even poorer play than *Timon;* it belongs to the same period of the poet's life. There are only two noteworthy things in it: the boundless admiration of Coriolanus for his mother, and his contempt and loathing of the common people.

We have seen again and again in the course of these studies how Shakespeare was helped by the storytellers, poets and historians from whom he took the skeleton of his plays. *Coriolanus* is an instance of the contrary and shows how he could be led astray by his authority, and through absolute ignorance of Roman history, could turn a picture into a monstrous caricature. The source of *Coriolanus* was Plutarch's life translated by

North. Plutarch's view of the Roman plebs in the time of Coriolanus was coloured by prepossessions derived from the mob of his own time, and it suffered besides from his strong aristocratic prejudice. He speaks of the popular leaders as "seditious tribunes," and represents the plebs as a needy rabble. But Plutarch had plain facts before him and had to admit that the poor rabble and their tribunes were the military mainstay of the State, whose valour often put the better classes to shame. The way the plebs won redress of intolerable grievances by withdrawing to the Sacred Mount was a convincing proof of self-control and disciplined civil temper.

Shakespeare caricatures all this. He himself, as we have seen, was an aristocrat by nature, in love with all the distinctions, dignities and delicacies of life, an artist-aristocrat of the finest poetic sensibilities, and as a poet-dramatist in the age of Elizabeth his naturally aristocratic temper was cultivated to excess. The middle classes of his time were puritans, who misunderstood and hated his art, and were despised by him as "lying shop-keepers" and insane sectaries. The people to him were mere groundlings, a low mob without understanding or taste. In spite of his loyalty to truth, he attributes the victory of Agin-

court to the king and nobles though it was won by the common English archers, and though this historical fact was before him, vouched for by Holinshed. In *Coriolanus* he again distorts facts to suit his aristocratic prepossessions. He represents the people as curs, "hares and geese," their caps all "greasy," their breaths "foul." It may be said that Shakespeare is here thinking of the English people and not of the Roman, but bad as the English common people may be, stupid as they are, sheepish as they are, they yet have courage enough, courage indeed, of a high good-humoured kind, but Shakespeare denies his mob courage and indeed every virtue.

From the point of view of art, this is not the worst fault of his aristocratic bias. Again and again in earlier plays he has shown that he knew very little about men of action; the fighting men and adventurers who were the most characteristic product of that jostling time were not his favourites. He has never given us any portraits of the Drakes or even of the Raleighs, and here where he has to paint an aristocrat of great courage who is self-willed and self-opinionated, he exaggerates his faults, and turns Coriolanus into an insufferable braggart and bully, thus rendering his would-be tragedy ridiculous. Plutarch, helped by facts,

was in this instance a far better artist than Shakespeare. He says of Coriolanus: his "natural wit and great heart did marvellously stir up his courage to do and attempt notable acts"; but "for lack of education he was so choleric and impatient that he would yield to no living creature; which made him churlish, uncivil, and altogether unfit for any man's conversation." It is just this "lack of education" which has always been the most conspicuous fault in the English aristocrat; he has always been, as Matthew Arnold put it, "impervious to ideas," and one would have expected that Shakespeare, who loved books and book-learning and large generalizations, would have noted this and drawn the moral from it; but he does not. His Coriolanus does not sin out of ignorance and hatred of ideas; but from insensate pride. Brutus the tribune says rightly enough that Coriolanus tops "all others in boasting," and as if Coriolanus himself wished to prove this, he declares he could fight "forty citizens," and this piece of braggadocio is not his worst. When banished from Rome he takes refuge with Aufidius. In the house of his great enemy he cannot help bragging of his victories over the people to whom he has fled for refuge. The scene is incredible. Aufidius praises him:

Say, what's thy name?
Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in't, though thy tackle's torn,
Thou show'st a noble vessel: what's thy name?
COR. Prepare thy brow to frown: know'st thou me yet?
AUF. I know thee not: thy name?
COR. My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done
To thee particularly and all the Volsces
Great hurt and mischief: thereto witness may
My surname, Coriolanus. . . .

This out-Pistols Pistol, and it does not stand alone. Coriolanus brags and bullies so that we lose sympathy with him and take sides with the mob and their tribunes. Again and again Shakespeare makes similar if less grave faults; it is fair to say that the worst blunders in all his work, such as this silly picture of bragging Coriolanus, the disgusting caricature of Joan of Arc, and that dreadful scene in *The Merchant of Venice* where young noblemen insult Shylock, who has been cheated and broken by a quibbling trick, are due directly to Shakespeare's snobbishness. As an artist his excessive volubility, even, is not so pernicious a weakness.

The other theme of the play is far more finely handled, and is far more necessary to our understanding of Shakespeare's life. In Plutarch, the mother of Coriolanus has more influence in the crises of the play than his wife. Shakespeare ex-

aggerated this tendency. The wife is gracious and charming in Plutarch, but Shakespeare finds a new trait to give her which is extraordinarily characteristic. We have seen how in youth he disliked his own wife for her violent temper and bitter scolding tongue: Coriolanus here addresses his wife as: "My gracious silence." One cannot but smile at the nursed resentment and curious praise.

The wife plays hardly any part in the drama; the whole interest is concentrated on the mother and son. It is Volumnia who urges her son to be "mild" and win the consulship; it is she who reproves him for his impatient despotic temper, who induces him at the last to forego his revenge on the Romans, and spare his native city. The speech of Coriolanus when he is on the point of yielding to his mother's pleading is impossible in the mouth of a Roman general, but is all the more characteristic of Shakespeare at this time:

> Like a dull actor now
> I have forgot my part, and I am out,
> Even to a full disgrace. . . .
> . . . You gods! I prate,
> And the most noble mother of the world
> Leave unsaluted: sink my knee, i' the earth
> Of thy deep duty more impression show
> Than that of common sons. . . .

Surely in the last lines of this self-revealing speech we catch an echo of Shakespeare's pride in himself and his intense admiration of his mother. Why should Coriolanus praise his mother to us? We expect here that he will ask her to share in the joy of his victory and exult in his success. But what he does is to praise her as if she were dead; and the truth is that Shakespeare's mother died in 1608 some little while before *Coriolanus* was written. It seems to me that his main reason for writing the play was to give some record of his admiration for his mother. A little later he lets her say:

> . . . There's no man in the world
> More bound to's mother. . . .

Perhaps some of my readers may wish me to carry my guess-work or divination of Shakespeare's real meaning a little further. Volumnia says:

> . . . here he lets me prate
> Like one i' the stocks. Thou hast never in thy life
> Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,
> When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
> Has cluck'd thee to the wars and safely home,
> Loaden with honour. . . .

Now consider the wildly exaggerated lines:

> . . . Thou hast never in thy life
> Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy. . . .

Coriolanus, as we have seen, has shown his mother every courtesy, and followed her advice again and again. It is poor Shakespeare who in the bitterness of his mourning and sorrow feels that he has not done enough for his "dear" mother while she was alive, has not rendered her courtesy enough. I think it probable from the last lines that Shakespeare when a youth had confided to his mother his intention of going to London, and that she had encouraged him.

So far my guess-work is borne out by the text; but now I would carry it a little farther than the text may seem to justify. When Coriolanus yields and agrees to be reconciled to the Romans, this is how he talks:

> O mother, mother!
> What have you done? Behold the heavens do ope,
> The gods look down and this unnatural scene
> They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!
> You have won a happy victory to Rome;
> But, for your son believe it, O believe it,
> Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd
> If not most mortal to him. . . .

One might perhaps ask why the gods should laugh at the scene. Nor can Coriolanus know that the result of his yielding will be his murder; it is all out of character, too, for a man brave to madness to be more apprehensive for his own

safety than his mother. The fault is slight, but it is there; the expressions are not finely suited to the situation; they are a little strained and forced; just enough to make me feel that his mother on her death-bed had probably begged something of Shakespeare which he had granted very reluctantly, and which to him had a touch of bitter humour in it. His mother, I feel, had made him promise to be reconciled to his wife. Think of the words; let them sink in the ear:

> . . . O my mother, mother! O!
> You have won a happy victory to Rome;
> But, for your son believe it, O believe it,
> Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd. . . .

It is all weak and gentle, false to Coriolanus; but most true to Shakespeare because he knew that a reconciliation with his wife could not be other than formal to him and worse—"most dangerous" in fact! He could never forgive his wife the injury she had done him in forcing him to marry her, or the dangers she had exposed him to when she drove him from Stratford with her bitter scolding.

The high interest of Coriolanus is that Shakespeare is intent on showing us in it how he loved his mother, the confidante of his dreams and ambitions in boyhood, and how deeply he regretted

her: . . . "no man in the world" owed more to his mother . . . "the most noble mother of the world." . . .

He paints her for us too; Volumnia has quick temper but more insight and good sense; she is always able to control herself in deference to judgment. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, who could not read or write, had in her the wisdom of the finest English natures; she saw her own faults and her son's, and usually counselled moderation. It was not his quick, adventurous and unfortunate father whom Shakespeare adored; but his wise, loving mother. Every mention of her in the play is steeped in tenderness; even the paltry, prejudiced tribune Sicinius has to admit that Coriolanus "loved his mother deeply."

The professor-mandarins will naturally pooh-pooh all this as if it were the very extravagance of conjecture; but after all it is for the reader to judge between us.

CHAPTER XIII

SHAKESPEARE'S DAUGHTER JUDITH AS MARINA, PERDITA, AND MIRANDA

Wo ich ihn nicht hab'
Ist mir das Grab
Die ganze Welt
Ist mir vergaellt.—*Faust.*

IN the eleventh chapter we saw that the portrait of his "dark lady" as Cleopatra is at once the truest and most complex portrait of his wanton mistress that Shakespeare ever painted; it was also his last portrait of her. *Antony and Cleopatra* was probably written early in 1608 shortly before Mary Fitton married for the second time, and left the court and Shakespeare for ever. All the unquenched desire, all the ineffable regret and sadness of his long passion are in those deathless words of the dying Antony:

Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.

When Mary Fitton left him, Shakespeare fell

to despair. The forces of youth in him were exhausted; his nerves gave way, and he crept home to Stratford a broken man. It is clear, as we shall see from *The Tempest,* that it was the loving care and tenderness of his young daughter Judith, and rest in his native air, which renewed his lease of life. He was forty-five years of age when he struggled again into the sunshine, shaking and weak, and when he took up the pen once more his work shows in every line diminished virility; of a sudden he had grown old. As I have shown in *The Man Shakespeare,* all his later "romances," are mere pale copies of earlier comedies. The humour in him and the love of life have grown faint; he cannot trouble to find new stories, or rather, it is only the old ones which appeal to him; he repeats himself. The story of *The Winter's Tale* is taken from *Much Ado;* Hermione is slandered Hero over again: and *The Tempest* with its story of the two Dukes repeats the theme of *As You Like It. Cymbeline,* too, is hardly more than a mixture of the themes of both these earlier comedies: Imogen is slandered like Hero and wanders out into the world like Rosalind. But in *Pericles, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* we have a totally new figure, that of a young innocent girl. As we have seen,

Shakespeare showed his grief for the death of his mother and the death of his son very plainly; we are now to learn what a profound impression his young daughter Judith made on him.

In 1608, the same year in which Mary Fitton married and left the Court, Shakespeare's mother died. He was probably called back to Stratford by the news of his mother's illness, and there he came to know his daughter Judith intimately. She was already twenty-two years of age. He could not have seen much of her on his previous visits; or perhaps he did not then need so much the tenderness she had to give. For now she not only became dear to him; but was a solace and source of strength. From this time on she lives for us in his art. To find her portrait in Marina of *Pericles,* in Perdita of *The Winter's Tale,* and in Miranda of *The Tempest* will surprise some readers, but the evidence is really quite sufficient. It should strike everyone that all these plays are warmed, so to speak, with the joy of reunited kinsfolk. All these maiden-heroines, too, have abstract names and are all manifestly portraits of the same girl, who was lost to her father (Perdita) and is now admired by him (Miranda). She is dutiful and sweet-tempered, but above all modest in mind and body. As we have

seen, all Shakespeare's pictures of girls before his breakdown were tainted with coarseness which often reached the impossible of uncharacteristic lewdness; but Marina, Perdita, and Miranda proclaim themselves virtuous at all costs. Instead of Juliet's and Portia's delighted freedom of speech we have now a careful avoidance by his girls of suggestive allusions.

The change is abrupt and marked, and in itself extraordinary. I can only explain it by the supposition that it was his daughter who brought Shakespeare to better knowledge. He goes out of his way to tell us in *The Tempest* that when cast adrift to die, it was his angelic daughter who won him back to life and endurance. The confession in the mouth of a magician is so extraordinary that I may be forgiven for believing that it is Shakespeare's account of what his daughter really was to him in his misery and loneliness:

> . . . O, a cherubin
> Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile
> Infused with a fortitude from heaven,
> When I have deck'd the sea with drops full salt
> Under my burthen groan'd; which raised in me
> An undergoing stomach to bear up
> Against what should ensue.

How the babe only three years old could show

" fortitude " Prospero does not tell us; but now let us consider these " romances " in order.

Pericles is the earliest of them and is to me very interesting for a dozen reasons, the most obvious, though certainly not the most important, being that the commentators all agree that " large parts of it are not by Shakespeare." The poets as usual set the tune. Coleridge finds in the beginning signs of Shakespeare's " indifference," and Swinburne talks of the " lean and barren style of these opening acts." Thus encouraged the mandarins give tongue boldly. Professor Herford bundles the first two acts neck and crop out of Shakespeare's work: " they are equally devoid of the brilliance of his youth and of the subtle technique of his maturity. They combine the imperfect craft of the 'prentice with the dulness of the journeyman." How categorical these professors are, to be sure, in condemning poor 'prentice Shakespeare who had already a dozen masterpieces to his credit—masterpieces they are not able to understand!

Even Marina's story does not please the professor completely. The " powerful realism of Boult and his crew " in the brothel was, he assures us airily, " within the compass of many a Jacobean dramatist."

It is beside my purpose at the moment to prove that all this is evidence of something else than Shakespeare's incompetence.

I find the master on almost every page in *Pericles*. The character of Pericles is manifestly Shakespeare's work from beginning to end: he is, indeed, an incarnation of Shakespeare himself, and his words are curiously characteristic and beautiful. Take almost his first speech in the first scene of the first act, when the daughter of Antiochus enters:

> See where she comes *apparell'd like the spring,*
> *Graces her subjects, and her thoughts the king*
> *Of every virtue gives renown to men!*
> Her face the book of praises, where is read,
> Nothing but curious pleasures as from thence,
> Sorrow were ever raz'd, and testy wrath
> Could never be her mild companion. . . .

Where else but in Shakespeare could one find anything like the magnificent lines I have put in italics? Swinburne's idea of a "lean and barren style" is amusing. I wonder how many finer lines there are in all the treasury of English verse than this:

> See where she comes apparell'd like the spring.

The very soul of Shakespeare is in the divine phrase; and what an optimist he was even to the

end; he will always have it that it is "virtue gives renown to men," whereas surely it is the extraordinary, the singular, whether for good or evil; the "sport," in fact. Nero will probably be remembered for his crimes as long as Marcus Aurelius for virtue.

The whole passage is as characteristic of Shakespeare as anything that can be found in all his works. The phrase that her face is "the book of praises, where is read nothing but curious pleasures," fills me with wonder for its peculiar frankness and with hope that Shakespeare will go on to tell us more about his mistress. We shall see in a moment that the hope is in part justified. Now I must proceed with the proof that the writing is Shakespeare's and his alone.

The pregnant confusion of that "testy wrath" and "mild companion" should have brought even the professors to knowledge, for it is an excellent instance of Shakespeare's overhasty thought.

The next speech of Pericles is just as characteristic. It begins:

> Antiochus, I thank thee who hath taught
> My frail mortality to know itself;
> . . . . . .

I do not need to quote more; this is Shakespeare

speaking as he speaks through Hamlet, without disguise.

Then Pericles is given the riddle to read, and at once he understands that the girl he loves and seeks in marriage, has been guilty of incest with her own father. This is how Pericles-Shakespeare takes the blow:

> . . . O you powers
> That give heaven countless eyes to view men's acts,
> Why cloud they not their sights perpetually,
> If this be true, which makes me pale to read it?
> Fair glass of light, I loved you, and could still,
> Were not this glorious casket stored with ill;
> But I must tell you now my thoughts revolt;
> For he's no man on whom perfections wait
> That knowing sin within will touch the gate.
> You are a fair viol, and your senses the strings;
> Who, finger'd to make man his lawful music,
> Would draw heaven down, and all the gods, to hearken:
> But being play'd upon before your time,
> Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime.
> Good sooth I care not for you. . . .

This passage is of extraordinary interest and importance: it is at once a confession of Shakespeare's love—"glorious casket"—and a condemnation of his mistress's wantonness. It is not the incest which shocks Pericles but the fact that the girl he loves has been "play'd upon" before her time. Mary Fitton had been "play'd upon" before she met Shakespeare at sixteen

years of age. He is extravagantly severe to her offence; she came to him tuned to another's playing, and what words he finds to justify his severity:

> For he's no man on whom perfections wait
> That knowing sin within will touch the gate. . . .

What a fine mind was Shakespeare's!—"man on whom perfections wait." Surely this is the same poet who in *Hamlet* wrote the marvellous eulogy on man. But I cannot stomach his conventional, pharisaical sex-morality. I am heartglad he was more tolerant in action than in speech, and had proved such sin a good many times before condemning it.

The next speech of Pericles is dramatically better suited to the circumstances, and at the same time no less characteristic of Shakespeare. He says with a certain irony:

> Great king,
> Few love to hear the sins they love to act;
> 'Twould braid yourself too near for me to tell it:
> Who has a book of all that monarchs do,
> He's more secure to keep it shut than shown:
> For vice repeated is like the wandering wind,
> Blows dust in others' eyes to spread itself; . . .

The reticence of speech and its justification by fear are peculiarly English.

It would be difficult to find a first scene of a

first act in which Shakespeare has revealed himself with such frankness and such masterly skill as in this first scene of *Pericles*.

In the second act Pericles is home again in Tyre and, instead of rejoicing at his escape, declares he is full of melancholy without rhyme or reason—the uncaused melancholy, again, of Jaques and Hamlet and Antonio. Here are the words:

Let none disturb us.
Why should this change of thoughts,
The sad companion, dull-eyed melancholy,
Be my so used a guest . . . .
Here pleasures court mine eyes, and mine eyes shun
them . . .

I need not continue: it must be enough now just to state here that the scene with the fishermen in this second act is so characteristic of Shakespeare that one might give parallel words from other plays for almost every line of it. The truth seems to be that in this play Shakespeare often expresses new ideas, and naturally his word-music suffers. But even Coleridge and Swinburne read Shakespeare by accent and adjective, by trick of rhythm and word, and knew but little of his soul; his range of mind was clean beyond them, and they could not recognize some of his finest work.

Professor Herford asserts that the "opening of the third act, by one of the most amazing transitions in literature, suddenly steeps us in the atmosphere of high poetry." But there is no such transition, and he who like the professor would attribute the scene of Pandar, Boult and Bawd in the Brothel to any one but Shakespeare, is, as the French say, "capable of anything." On one page I find Boult crying to Marina: "that she would make a puritan of the devil, if he could cheapen a kiss of her," and on the very next page Lysimachus says:

> She'll do the deed of darkness,

the very phrase Edgar uses in *Lear*.

Some day I may go through this comedy and show Shakespeare's handiwork on every page as I see it; but here I have perhaps done enough.

Once we accept the fact that Pericles is an incarnation of Shakespeare himself and that the play is his, two points must interest us. First of all, *Pericles* was one of Shakespeare's most popular plays; it was therefore condemned by the envious Jonson as "a mouldy tale." Its popularity was chiefly due to the scenes in the brothel. Did Shakespeare deliberately invent these scenes to win the applause of the many? I believe he did,

just as he beat the patriotic drum in *Henry V.* long after he had ceased to feel very patriotic. Secondly, what most surprised Shakespeare in his daughter Judith-Marina was her modesty. Her innate purity, indeed, astonished him to such a degree, impressed him so sincerely, that he shows it to us by placing her in a brothel and depicting her as immediately converting all comers and even the lewd servant to belief in her angelic innocence. And she carries it all through with a high hand. In spite of his disillusions and despairings, Shakespeare still idealizes life to an extraordinary extent.

Marina hardly lives for us though Shakespeare has lent her his singing robes again and again. She cries:

> O that the gods
> Would set me free from this unhallow'd place,
> Though they did change me to the meanest bird
> That flies i' the purer air!

But on the very next page she tells Boult he is:

> . . . the damned doorkeeper to every
> Coistrel that comes inquiring for his Tib . . .

which is excellent Shakespeare who learned scurrility with Doll Tearsheet and Falstaff, but certainly is not pleasing in the virginal Marina, and

in the next page when Boult asks, "Can you teach all this you speak of?" she replies:

> Prove that I cannot, take me home again,
> And prostitute me to the basest groom
> That doth frequent your house.

"Prove that I cannot, bring me here again," would be tremendous in its reticence, but as the phrase stands, and especially as amplified by the next two lines, it becomes a rank offence. It evidently took more than Lear's "civet" to sweeten Shakespeare's imagination.

Of course, this Marina must go on to brag of her gentle birth:

> My derivation was from ancestors
> Who stood equivalent with mighty kings. . . .

The sketch is not realized; Marina cannot be said to live for us in spite of her love of flowers and her purity, but this last quality makes her so strange an apparition in Shakespeare's pages, that we can set her down as a reflection from the real world, and not an imaginary figure.

The Winter's Tale has a second motive in it: not only does it glow with the joy of reunited kinsfolk, but like *Cymbeline, Pericles* and *Henry VIII.* it is also touched with the tragedy of slandered womanhood. Having come to life again

and some measure of strength, Shakespeare cannot help playing sadly with the idea of the joy that might have been his, had Mary Fitton been true, had his jealousy slandered her. When Leontes sees his wife's image he cries:

> No settled senses of the world can match
> The pleasure of that madness. . . .

I find further evidence that Shakespeare is thinking of his love, Mary Fitton, in *The Winter's Tale,* as much as he is thinking of his reunion with his daughter, in an incident which takes place towards the end of the play. Paulina reproaches the gentleman for praising Perdita beyond Hermione:

> . . . your writing now
> Is colder than that theme, 'She had not been,
> Nor was not to be equall'd';—thus your verse
> Flower'd with her beauty once. . . .

That "She had not been, nor was not to be equall'd" is significant to me.

It is apparent that Shakespeare has given Mary Fitton's courage and quick temper to Paulina, and by adding loyalty has turned her into another Beatrice. But the most convincing piece of evidence of the personal feeling in the play lies in the fact that Shakespeare here, in Leontes,

merely copies the jealousy which he has already depicted for us in Hamlet and Othello, and which he will paint again in Posthumus. It is the act always that enrages him, and not the hurt to tenderness nor the loss of affection:

> . . . his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by
> Sir Smile, his neighbour. . . .

It is the outward and visible signs of the falsity which madden him:

> Is whispering nothing?
> Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
> Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
> Of laughter with a sigh?—a note infallible
> Of breaking honesty— . . .

This Shakespeare-Leontes, too, will generalize his affliction and rave like Lear and Timon:

"It is a bawdy planet . . . no barricado for a belly . . . many thousands on's have the disease and feel't not. . . ."

A chief feature of all these romances written after his breakdown is that Shakespeare falls back again into his incorrigible idealism: character is immutable. In the first scene of the first act, young Prince Mamillius is praised by all the gentlemen with superlatives that mock reality. It is fitting enough in Paulina to call him the "jewel

of children," but men don't praise another man's child so extravagantly. Shakespeare is evidently thinking of his son Hamnet who died in boyhood. But his idealism comes to clearest view in his picture of Perdita. She is like a sketch copied on tracing paper of Marina. There is the same love of flowers, but enskied now in the rarest beauty of expression. There is the same innate purity; she judges her lover by herself:

> By the pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out
> The purity of his. . . .

She loves modesty of speech too: she begs Florizel to warn Autolycus that "he use no scurrilous words in's tunes." Yet every now and then Shakespeare mars even Perdita's maiden purity by his own rank imaginings, as he does Marina's, though not so grossly. Perdita speaks of Florizel as:

> . . . a bank for love to lie and play on:
> Not like a corse; or, if not to be buried,
> But quick and in my arms. . . .

But a girl cannot be painted by two or three simple touches such as modesty, a love of flowers, and a pout of self-will, for these qualities are common to girlhood. There are not enough individual features given to Perdita to make her

live for us, and, worst of all, there are no faults; she does not cast a shadow.

It takes passion to teach a man what a woman is; at any rate it took passion to teach Shakespeare, for without it, he could not even portray the daughter he loved. Perdita is a prettier and daintier sketch than Marina, but, after all, she is only the merest sketch.

Everything I have said of *The Winter's Tale,* I could repeat about *Cymbeline.* The two motives of his later romances are both repeated in it: joy in the reunion of kindred and the tragedy of slandered womanhood. But Shakespeare has enriched *Cymbeline* with a careful full-length portrait of himself in Posthumus, a staider Hamlet. Again and again, now through this character, and now through that, he speaks of Mary Fitton and his love for her with the frankness of an old memory. The idealizing tendencies in him come to full flower in this play. He will paint us the rose of womanhood in Imogen, and nine out of ten readers, and all the poets, have cheered this long catalogue of feminine perfections as a masterpiece of portraiture. Imogen, of course, like Perdita, does not live for a moment: she has not a single fault; she is faultily faultless indeed, inhumanly perfect; and no man or woman can be

made lifelike to us without defects, vices which bear some subtle relation to the virtues. Shakespeare, too, saw this, but his idealizing tendency prevented him from acting on it. In *The Tempest* his Ferdinand says:

> . . . never any
> With so full a soul, but some defect in her
> Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed
> And put it to the foil. . . .

This Imogen is not only an abstract of perfection, she is perfection as imagined by weak old age, and not responsive-quick as desired by lusty youth. One has only to put her beside Juliet for a moment to realize how Shakespeare has declined into the vale of years. Juliet says:

> Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
> That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo
> Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen.
> Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
> By their own beauties.

Posthumus says of Imogen:

> Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd
> And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with
> A pudency so rosy, the sweet view on't
> Might well have warmed old Saturn.

Neither of these expressions is finely characteristic; but of the two the words of Juliet are far

the truer and more convincing. There is a deeper reality in Juliet's passion; and in her high temper and contempt of the Nurse we catch the features of the living model which lend life to the idealized sketch. Shakespeare's greatest pictures of women are not Perdita nor Imogen, much less any of the goody-goody nonentities such as Ophelia or Desdemona; but Juliet, Beatrice, Rosaline, and Cressida, and above all, the incomparable Cleopatra, " the serpent of old Nile."

The soul of *Cymbeline* is to be found in Shakespeare's portrait of himself as Posthumus, and the description of his mad jealousy. He has been in the valley of the shadow of death, and has crept out of it into the sunshine, shaken and infirm, and yet as soon as the blood begins to move again in his veins the memories of his lost mistress begin to throb and ache: the jealous rage of her infidelities burns in him till he dies. Lear's image is the finest word for Shakespeare after his breakdown:

> You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave.
> . . . I am bound
> Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
> Do scald like molten lead.

We are forced to recognize in this jealous rage of Leontes and of Posthumus an echo of the same

insensate passion that raved in *Hamlet* and *Othello,* and screamed in *Lear* and *Timon.* Leontes uses Hamlet's very words: he talks of "paddling palms" (*Hamlet,* Act iii, sc. 4), and Posthumus will generalize his anger till it reaches the universal condemnation of womanhood of *Lear* and *Timon.* He says:

> Is there no way for men to be but women
> Must be half-workers? We are all bastards; . . .

Again it is the act enrages him:

> . . . I thought her
> As chaste as unsunn'd snow, O all the devils!
> This yellow Iachimo, in an hour, was't not?—
> Or less,—at first?—perchance he spoke not, but
> Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German one,
> Cried "O"; and mounted; found no opposition
> But what he look'd for should oppose and she
> Should from encounter guard. . . .

This Posthumus has thought over every fault a woman can possess; he has lived with jealousy for years:

> . . . could I find out
> The woman's part in me! for there's no motion
> That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
> It is the woman's part: be it lying, note it,
> The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;
> Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers revenge, hers;
> Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,
> Nice longings, slanders, mutability,

All thoughts that may be named, nay, that hell knows,
Why hers, in part, or all; but rather all;
For even to vice
They are not constant, but are changing still
One vice, but of a minute old, for one
Not half so old as that. I'll write against them,
Detest them, curse them: yet 'tis greater skill
In a true hate to pray they have their will:
The very devils cannot plague them better.

In these last two lines, I fancy, Shakespeare is thinking of Mary Fitton's intrigue with Lord Herbert and her subsequent disappointment.

Posthumus, as I have shown elsewhere, is not only Shakespeare in his jealousy, but Shakespeare in every fault and every virtue. Shakespeare's sympathy with the poor which we first heard in *Lear* is here marked again: he says of the gods:

> I know you are more clement than vile men
> Who of their broken debtors take a third;
> A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again
> On their abatement. . . .

It would be interesting to hear Shakespeare's opinion of Mr. Chamberlain's bankruptcy laws in which these same "vile men" take from their "broken debtors," not a tenth or a sixth, but all they have, and then hold their future to servitude. But even from Shakespeare the English will only learn the lessons which please them, and not the nobler teaching.

Shakespeare's patriotism, too, is here defined. Posthumus says:

> For being now a favourer to the Briton,
> No more a Briton. . . .

He is as wise, too, about life as Hamlet, and a little more hopeless: he can see nothing beyond the grave:

> I tell thee fellow, there are none want eyes
> To direct them the way I am going, but such
> As wink and will not use them . . .

Like Prospero this Posthumus finds the "fangled world" a dream.

I may be thought to be going too far when I say that Shakespeare brings in the father of Posthumus as an easy way to speak again of Herbert:

> Why did you suffer Iachimo,
> Slight thing of Italy. . . .
> To taunt his nobler heart and brain
> With needless jealousy;
> And to become the geck and scorn
> O' th' other's villany?

That "slight thing of Italy" is to me a side-long glance at the Italian vices of Lord William Herbert and the Italianate Englishman—the foul suggestion of Parolles and of *Troilus and Cressida* here repeated again and emphasized.

Shakespeare is manifestly thinking of Mary Fitton when Cymbeline thus excuses his blind love for the Queen:

> Mine eyes
> Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;
> Mine ears, that heard her flattery; nor my heart,
> That thought her like her seeming; it had been vicious
> To have mistrusted her: yet O my daughter!
> That it was folly in me, thou may'st say,
> And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

It looks to me as if Shakespeare had told his love-story to his young daughter. The end is curiously characteristic: "Heaven mend all!" I cannot help recalling here Shakespeare-Biron's expression sixteen years before, when he first met his love and realized that she was wanton: "Heaven amend us: heaven amend us!" But characteristic as it is, it is not all we expected from Shakespeare; yet it was his last word on Mary Fitton and his passion for her. "I could not help it," he cries, "the fault was in me as well as in her. . . . Heaven amend us. . . . Heaven mend all."

I have always regarded *The Tempest* as Shakespeare's last work; his testament, I have called it, to the English people. But before speaking of its high ethical content, let me just say that the one female figure in it, Miranda,

though much more carefully painted, is not so successful a portrait as that of Perdita. Perdita has a touch of wilfulness in her and passion which gives her a sort of life; she dances before us with girlish grace, flower-crowned. Miranda is all pity, love, and humble courtesy; his daughter is no longer so present to Shakespeare; and in spite of the magic of his poetry, Miranda is only an ethereal shadow-shape, hardly as human, indeed, as Ariel. Let us take the confession of her love. She says to Ferdinand:

> . . . by my modesty,
> The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
> Any companion in the world but you,
> Nor can imagination form a shape,
> Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle
> Something too wildly. . . .

"I would not wish any companion in the world but you," is a gem of the purest water; but I cannot abide the "modesty" business, and that "prattle" gets on my nerves; it sounds like a giddy young thing of forty-five talking; it is not to be endured. A little later Ferdinand tells her of his love, and Miranda weeps, in Early-Victorian fashion, at what she longs for. My will to admire is washed away; Miranda is too mawkish—a mere projection of Shakespeare's idealizing faculty, at the fag end of his life.

When she sees the courtiers she finds them "goodly creatures," and exclaims:

> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
> That has such people in't!

—gentle Shakespeare at his best. In spite of weakness and ill-health he is still all admiration of the world and in love with its bravery and novelty.

Of all his masterpieces, and he has written more than a dozen, *The Tempest* is the most extraordinary. We have noticed in him from the beginning the strange union of poet-philosopher; one moment he is all given to abstract thought and generalization, stringing together a myriad pearls of experience in one phrase; the next he is all passion and poetry with the concrete instance before him and nothing else.

It is a tendency in fine minds to become more philosophic as they grow older, and to busy themselves with types and abstractions rather than with human beings and human passions. Shakespeare shows this impulse in *The Tempest* as clearly as Goethe does in the second part of *Faust;* but Shakespeare's abstractions are far more human. As his thoughts soar into the blue, his poetry lifts with it, and the lyrical interbreath-

ing of human passion adds the pulse of life to the ineffable spirit-beauty of the thought. Shakespeare had the shaping spirit of imagination at his command to the very end; Ariel never leaves him till set free. Goethe, on the other hand, took his abstractions from the pure intellect: at his worst he is as lifeless as Mr. H. G. Wells; his types have no blood in them, no reality: he even gives them abstract names — the Have-Soons and Have-Nothings. But Caliban lives; he smacks of the soil: we know his drunkenness, his desires, his temper; even Ariel on occasion revisits the glimpses of the moon.

I find proof of Shakespeare's divine intelligence in every difference. Goethe has drawn out the second part of *Faust* till it is a weariness of the flesh even in memory; whereas *The Tempest* is among the very shortest of Shakespeare's dramas. Till the end our poet's judgment was almost unerring; his instinct tremulously true, like needle flickering about the pole.

He suffered in life infinitely more than Goethe, more even than Dante, but he draws out of it all into higher, sweeter air than even the greatest. This *Tempest,* as I have said, is like sun-warmed, love-warmed fruit, filled with the juice of human kindness and sweet to the core.

Shakespeare still carries about with him his individual peculiarities and little faults. Though he sees himself now for the first time as he really is—a mighty magician and master of a most potent art, he cannot resist making himself a prince as well; and perhaps with reason; for he is in very deed, a sovereign whose kingdom is not subject to boundary of space or time.

The personal touches are most dear to me. Here at the very end he confesses how he gave up all ambitious hopes of governing and desire of state for secret study and the "bettering" of his mind. Like Carlyle he cherished the belief that he could "steer humanity" more wisely and to nobler goals than the professional politicians, and who can doubt his competence though, alas, the silly sheep-world has not yet realized its need of such divine guidance. Characteristic it is, too, of Shakespeare that he should ascribe Prospero's betrayal and downfall to his trust in the brother he loved.

Even here Shakespeare cannot forget the lessons of life. He is delighted to see that Ferdinand and his daughter are in love with each other; but he mistrusts this "swift business" and takes pains to trouble the course of true love, "lest too light winning make the prize light." His own un-

happy marriage is in his mind, even at the supreme hour. He warns Ferdinand not to give "dalliance too much the rein," for if enjoyment comes before marriage "barren hate" must follow:

> Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew
> The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
> That you shall hate it both. . . .

He confesses that unlike the mighty magician he gives himself out for and really is, he feels very infirm and weak, and often has to walk a little to still his "beating mind."

What lessons too he preaches; the same lessons he has preached all his life—repentance and forgiveness. Again and again he conjures us to trust the nobler reason, and not indulge in anger or revenge:

> . . . the rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance; they being penitent,
> The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
> Not a frown further. . . .

And at the very end when life is waning to its exigent he will have all about him cheerful. He will give to all the company, including his enemies, "calm seas" and "auspicious gales," for their homecoming; for it is a "brave new world" and he loves the "goodly people" in it. He is very

human too, and in spite of his courage and his desire to give joy and sunny days to others, he knows that for him the end is near and he shudders at the thought of the grave. The epilogue by Prospero is heart-breaking in its unexpected, despairing sadness:

> Now my charms are all o'erthrown
> And what strength I have's mine own
> Which is most faint. . . .
> Gentle breath of yours my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. Now I want
> Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
> And my ending is despair
> Unless I be relieved by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself and frees all faults.
> As you from crimes would pardon'd be
> Let your indulgence set me free.

In these extremes our Shakespeare discovers himself. At one moment smiling and full of good wishes for all, the next in tears overwhelmed with the sense of man's mortality. We leave him here on his knees praying, our gentle Shakespeare, the wisest and noblest of our race; for though we do not kneel, and have almost forgotten how to pray, to us as to him the road is shrouded in never-ending Night, and whither it leads no man may divine.

CHAPTER XIV

A LAST WORD ABOUT SHAKESPEARE'S PASSION: THE PASSIONATE PILGRIME: KING HENRY VIII.

SINCE I began publishing these studies in *The English Review* two questions have reached me from all sides. "Can you prove to us," my correspondents write, "a little more fully that Shakespeare's affection for Herbert was merely friendship, and can you show us more clearly why he was unable to hold Mary Fitton?" . . . "Have you any more evidence on either point?"

The first question is no longer interesting. I have handled it convincingly, it seems to me, in the chapter on *All's Well*, and really the answer is obvious: Shakespeare and unnatural passion are a contradiction in terms. Think of it. He was one of the most impressionable and articulate of men; he had boys before him playing girls' parts for twenty-five years, and with this terrible lawless passion in him, he never lent one of them an ambiguous word, or invented an ambiguous situation. Much has been made of his custom of

putting his heroines into boy's clothes; but the critics forget that his heroines were boys and so there was no suggestiveness in the changed raiment. When Goethe shows his heroine in a page's dress, the erotic appeal is undeniable.

To any one who knows Shakespeare and the mocking intellect in him which created Iago and Richard III. and Thersites, the assumption that he concealed any passionate feeling is unthinkable. He would have wandered on the forbidden ground at every opportunity: the dangerous suggestion would have lured him back unconsciously again and again; his works would have reeked with it. He was not ashamed of sensual passion or its expression; he delighted in both; he avows his desire for his gypsy-wanton in every poem and play in the plainest terms. He curses himself for being too fond; while the despotic intellect in him defends even his lechery:

> For why should others' false adulterate eyes
> Give salutation to my sportive blood?
> Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
> Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
> No, I am that I am, and they that level
> At my abuses reckon up their own:
> I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel;

Sooner or later Shakespeare's imperial intelligence would have asserted that what was good

for him was not to be condemned by any man or by all men. But nowhere is there a hint of such an attitude. On the contrary he condemns himself and his mistress again and again for yielding to their natural passion.

Moreover, his envious contemporaries who knew him most intimately, who criticized him most bitterly—men like Jonson who enjoyed his friendship, and who were not afraid to state all they knew about him—never hint at any such vice. Jonson does not hesitate to say that Shakespeare and his friend had between them "but one drab"; but he never suggests anything worse.

The sonnets, too, addressed to the young man which have any warmth of desire in them, are one and all copied from the lyrics to the "dark lady"; they are faint pastels, so to speak, of his passion for his mistress. The person who cannot feel the significance of this cannot read Shakespeare. Let me give one final instance. We have seen that again and again he has attributed to his mistress that magic of personality which makes "the very refuse of her deeds" become her, so that in his mind her "worst all best exceeds." He has given this very same praise to his Cleopatra, and in Sonnet 96, he attributes this power to his youth-

ful friend: but here the expression is merely graceful and pretty and not passionate:

> Thou makest faults graces that to thee resort. . . .

The following two lines of the sonnet show that even here he is thinking more of his mistress than of the youth; and then the tone changes to one of affectionate reproof; he repeats Parolles' accusation that Bertram-Herbert ate up the fry of virginity like a whale, and begs his friend not to go on in this evil way:

> As on the finger of a throned queen
> The basest jewel will be well esteem'd,
> So are those errors that in thee are seen
> To truths translated and for true things deem'd,
> How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
> If like a lamb he could his looks translate!
> How many gazers mightst thou lead away,
> If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state!
> But do not so; I love thee in such sort
> As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

The palmary peculiarity of Shakespeare's intellect is that it always stands for morality—even for conventional sex-morality—for the rule and not for the exception. He regards virginity as the priceless jewel of a girl: virtue in a woman has to him but one meaning; intimacy even in those about to be married is a sad and terrible mistake; lust is " an expense of spirit in a waste

of shame"; seduction a crime; he is English through and through. Indeed he is so desperately conventional in this respect that I have to explain his obstinate narrowness to myself by saying Mary Fitton was seduced before she met him; probably he said to himself "had I been the first with her; all would have been different: I should have kept her true." Shakespeare only touches upon inverted sex-relations casually, in *Troilus and Cressida,* and then with uttermost contempt and loathing. I will not labour this point more, or discuss it further; it is beyond doubt.

Shakespeare's relations with his wanton mistress are infinitely more complicated and more interesting. Let us now consider the whole story, once more, and see whether we can read the riddle of Mary Fitton's unfaith and of Shakespeare's lifelong passion.

In this final survey the reader will not only have to use imaginative sympathy; he will have to trust his guide a little as Dante trusted Vergil. In the last resort it is by faith we learn; by faith alone we grow. I have a very definite idea of the relations between Shakespeare and his superb mistress; so far as I can prove what they were, I will; but beyond proof lies the magic perfumed

garden of passion with its velvet-soft ways and flower-starred banks where the whole being is quickened to a diviner life, and men and women, ill-matched in every other relation, may here win to the soul's ecstasy.

First of all there appear to be contradictions, difficult to reconcile, in his mistress's character and in Shakespeare's view of her. The points from which he sees her lie as far apart as winter from summer; they are separated by all the infinite between love and hate. From what we know, indeed, a perfect synthesis of the contraries is hardly to be expected. For example, in Sonnet 141, he tells his mistress she is not in any way perfect; he notes a thousand errors in her, and goes on to declare he does not desire her "sweet body." Here are the astonishing lines:

> Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted;
> Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,
> Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
> To any sensual feast with thee alone:
> But my five wits nor my five senses can
> Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee.

In Sonnet 151, on the other hand, he asserts that it is his "gross body" which "betrays his nobler part"; his body it is which forces his soul to look on her as his "triumphant prize." At first sight here is blank contradiction on which

the professors might chew for ever; yet it is all simple enough really. He wants to tell her in the earlier sonnet that in spite of her faults, he adores her, that though sensually she is not perfect to him, still in some mysterious inexplicable way she appeals to him intensely. He desires her very imperfections more than perfection itself. He has known more cunning mistresses, women better versed in the subtle arts of love; but still he prefers her, and the second sonnet in its unrestrained sensuality only re-affirms this view.

There is just a fragment of evidence as to his mistress's shortcomings as a lover which I have not yet used and which I must introduce here, for it shows I am right in my reading of these apparently contradictory sonnets. In 1599, a miscellaneous collection of sonnets and poems was published under the title of "The Passionate Pilgrime by W. Shakespeare." Some of these sonnets and poems are Shakespeare's; some belong just as certainly to others, but there are two which are not positively attributed to him, which are his, Nos. 7 and 12. The twelfth deals with the difference between youth and age and does not concern us here: the seventh appears to be a poem written about his mistress in the early days of their love-making. It is a realistic snapshot of

her, almost as complete as the harsh photograph of Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost.* The verses were probably written somewhat later than the play; for we find in them the Mary Fitton of complete intimacy, the cajoling, wheedling, emotional wanton afterwards revealed in Cleopatra. Every verse is astonishing in portraiture, and the last line's a revelation:

Fair is my love, but not so fair as fickle,
Mild as a dove, but neither true nor trusty,
Brighter than glass and yet, as glass is brittle;
Softer than wax and yet as iron rusty:
A lily pale, with damask dye to grace her,
None fairer, nor none falser to deface her.

Her lips to mine how often hath she joined,
Between each kiss her oaths of true love swearing!
How many tales to please me hath she coined,
Dreading my love, the loss thereof still fearing!
Yet in the midst of all her pure protestings,
Her faith, her oaths, her tears, and all were jestings.

She burn'd with love, as straw with fire flameth;
She burn'd out love, as soon as straw out-burneth;
She framed the love, and yet she foil'd the framing;
She bade love last, and yet she fell a-turning.
Was this a lover, or a lecher whether?
Bad in the best, though excellent in neither.

She was bad as a lover then and not excellent even as a mistress. The distinction itself goes to prove that Shakespeare had already had a good deal of experience.

But loving her with this intensity, why was he unable to hold her? It is true she had been loose before she met Shakespeare, and a "wanton" who will be "riggish" is much more difficult to keep loyal than a maiden. But mere sensuality is not enough to explain why his love was faithless to Shakespeare; Shakespeare should have been able, we feel, to hold any woman in spite of vagrant desires.

I cannot help thinking that the first reason of her infidelity was his own unfaith. True, he is always asserting his devoted love and perfect constancy as in *Troilus;* but the Trojan youth protests too absolutely; he makes one suspicious. If we know anything about Shakespeare at all, we know that he was always a loose liver. It is curious, too, that he never suggests the man's prior fault as excusing or explaining a mistress's slips. For example, Cleopatra is excessively jealous; when she flirts with Thyreus and Antony accuses her, why does she not retort, "And you? Did you not marry Octavia in spite of your promises to keep faithful to me?" But not a hint do we get of the retort that would naturally spring first of all to any woman's lips. The Galahad-like, extravagant protestations of Troilus, and this unnatural reticence of Cleopatra's jealousy, where

reproach would be both natural and justified, confirm my suspicions. Mary Fitton was probably as true to Shakespeare as he deserved, and if she were the first to play false with Lord William Herbert, it was at the very beginning of their intimacy before she knew much about Shakespeare, and when his attitude towards women was, as we have seen, very light, very confident, not to say contemptuous; calculated, that is, to inspire a proud and passionate woman with distrust.

Let me first answer the chief questions that suggest themselves, and then reconstruct the story and see whether it fits in with what we know and is in itself convincing. First of all, did his gypsy-wanton really love Shakespeare? She gave herself to him, we know, with utter abandonment, and certainly taught him all the phases of jealous passion so that he was able to reproduce them afterwards with miraculous assurance in Cleopatra. I am inclined to think from the assertions of Enobarbus that Mary Fitton had more of "the finest part of pure love" in her than Shakespeare.

But if they both loved passionately, why didn't the ardent desire wear itself out quickly? How came the madding fever to last for over a dozen years? The explanation is to be found in the circumstances of the lovers. The two were far

apart. Mary Fitton was held to the court, and Shakespeare to his theatre. And in their separation both were continually tempted; the flood of desire was thwarted and hemmed and turned awry by all sorts of obstacles.

Why did Shakespeare take his mistress's slips so bitterly to heart? He must have known that the flesh is faithless in women as in men, and almost as quick to thrill to the allurement of change and the temptation of novelty. We feel that he should either have had resolution enough to conquer his mistress gradually, and win her to loyalty by ineffable tenderness, or he should have accepted her for what she was and thanked her for what she gave.

Could he at any time have won her completely? Everyone will answer this question according to his own experience. But let us take upon us the mystery of things for once, and be as God's spies and discover the heart of the secret. Had Shakespeare, instead of telling Mary Fitton how he desired her, told her how beautiful she was; had he given her tenderness as well as passion, and honeyed flatteries rather than jealous reproaches, he might have kept her true to the end. It was just his weakness, his terrible greedy sensuality, that blinded him and prevented him using

his attaching soul-subduing qualities. This once Shakespeare was as human-foolish as the rest of us. He tells us in *Troilus and Cressida* that love and wisdom don't house together:

> . . . To be wise and love
> Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above.

He desired Mary Fitton too madly to be master of his resources and play the game; he did not love her unselfishly enough to win her or lightly enough to accept her infidelities.

Let me now run over the incidents of the story. Shakespeare seems to have stepped into the primrose path very heedlessly. From a dozen dramas we know that his love kept him at a distance at first; Leontes-Shakespeare says that Hermione kept him off "three crabbed months," and this was possibly about the period.

He could probably only see her when she came to the theatre. She gave herself to him easily, never dreaming that he was capable of a deathless passion, never thinking of a lasting affection between herself and this older married man. Naturally she did not realize his worth, his extraordinary genius; her ignorance nettled his vanity, and in the hope of soothing it and misled by snobbishness he foolishly sent Lord Herbert to her.

She fell in love with Herbert, who was of her own class and age and who was made up to, as we know from *The Lover's Complaint,* by all the court ladies as the very flower of aristocratic fashion. She won him, but soon had to recognize his utter unworthiness. Later she took up with Shakespeare again, and they tasted all the sweets of love together. But his ticklish vanity had been wounded by her preference for Herbert, and his high ethical conscience condemned her looseness. Probably, too, her failure to appreciate him at his true value kept a certain contempt of her alive in him. Then, too, it was difficult to meet her as often as he would have wished, and he made these difficulties a grief against her.

At length, partly out of anger, partly out of contempt of her, partly out of wounded vanity, partly because he was very sensual, he betrayed her with some Mrs. Daventry, the Oxford innkeeper's wife, or other beauty. No doubt Mary Fitton heard of it. London was a small place in those days, and the courts and theatres were whispering galleries of scandal, and naturally her "foul pride" at once incited her to better his teaching. Then his jealousy flamed into hating and contemptuous-bitter reproaches as he

shows us in *Hamlet.* Afterwards, reconciliations took place, and all anger was drowned in days of delighted abandonment; we can hear his heart throbbing heavily in Othello and in Troilus and in Antony, and so the wild passion stormed along for a dozen years, now in heaven, now in hell, till Mary Fitton married for the second time in 1608, and left the court and Shakespeare never to return.

I have told how Shakespeare crept home to Stratford a broken man and how in his native air he was nursed back to life again by his daughter Judith. As soon as he recovered some slight measure of strength, thoughts of his fascinating mistress returned to him, and his jealous rage began to torment him again. At length, warned probably by increasing weakness, he pulled himself together for a final effort, and wrote *The Tempest.*

As we have seen, the whole of Shakespeare's mature work is coloured, inspired, indeed, by his love of Mary Fitton; all his great tragedies are steeped in his insensate passion for his gypsy-mistress. Without her he would never have written *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Timon,* or *Lear,* nor pictured his Cleopatra. Had she been less wilful-wanton, he might have been happier

perhaps; but he would never have reached such self-knowledge or attained such fame. Mary Fitton did not lead Shakespeare to the "heart of loss," as his Antony cried, but to the Holy of Holies of Fame's Temple. Yet Shakespeare*

* All the critics, headed by Tennyson and Emerson, give this magnificent passage to Fletcher; the masters because there are weak passages in the scene, the critics because forsooth there is often an extra syllable at the end of the verse. They are all mistaken. They might as well give the great soliloquy in *Hamlet* to Fletcher. There is nothing of this quality in all Fletcher's writings. Every word of it is pure Shakespeare, and every word of it can be matched in his other work. The equivalent of the first lines can be found in *Antony and Cleopatra,* Act IV, scene xii.

> . . . . . she, Eros, has
> Pack'd cards with Cæsar, and false play'd my glory
> Unto an enemy's triumph. . . . . .

The splendid simile:

> "No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours"

we have already admired in Sonnet 132 when Shakespeare compares his mistress's eyes to that

> "full star that ushers in the even."

"Gild" every reader of the sonnets knows is a favourite word of the master-poet and "the noble troops that waited upon my smiles" we have already met in Shakespeare-Macbeth's longing for "troops of friends." Weak endings or strong, only one man has ever lived in England who could write such poetry.

repeats and emphasizes his accusation against her in *Henry VIII.* His Wolsey says:

> . . . . all my glories
> In that one woman I have lost for ever:
> No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,
> Or gild again the noble troops that waited
> Upon my smiles. . . .

What does Shakespeare mean? It is his most intimate sincerest utterance; his poetry even never reaches higher pitch on this theme. We must weigh each word then in fine balances.

First of all, why this plural, "glories?" Shakespeare we know had lost Lord William Herbert through Mary Fitton, and he had hoped great things from him. The young lord, no doubt had praised him enthusiastically and promised as soon as he himself came to power to get the poet a place under government—a place in which his extraordinary qualities might have a fair field.

Shakespeare, as we have already noticed, hinted at something like this in *The Tempest.* The hope of high position explains to me his extraordinary subservience to Herbert in the Sonnets, and the extravagant way he afterwards in play after play blamed his ingratitude. It would need a volume to collect all my reasons for this view. My readers must not think I put it forth

hastily or without due thought. But prove it completely I cannot here or perhaps anywhere.

In fine I think Shakespeare means to tell us that all his highest ambitions foundered in the loss of Herbert's friendship, and he lost Herbert through Mary Fitton.

> . . all my glories
> In that one woman I have lost for ever . . .

He means further that he had spent the best twelve years of his life in the earthy-coarse service of his imperious mistress, just as Ariel, "the shaping spirit of his imagination", had passed twelve years in the service of Sycorax, the foul witch. Blinded by his English dislike of "languishing love" and his English condemnation of lust, Shakespeare does not see, or will not see, that it was just his intense passion for his mistress that gave soul to his greatest works; in other words, that he owes the better half of his glory to the mistress he reviles and condemns. He does not see either, or will not see, that the woman a man loves with such passion must be his ideal, must correspond most intimately to all his desires—conscious and unconscious—as coin to die; she is his complement; and to condemn her is self-condemnation.

But was Mary Fitton then Shakespeare's equal? is the question which will spring to almost every lip. Certainly, in Love's lists, is the only possible reply. To him she was marvellously beautiful, her figure even more enchanting than her face: he talks of "glorious casket" in *Pericles* and in *Twelfth Night* confesses

> . . . 'tis that miracle and queen of gems
> That nature pranks her in attracts my soul."

When at his best, as in *Antony and Cleopatra,* Shakespeare himself recognized and acknowledged that his proud gypsy was at least his peer. Again and again in that marvellous love-duet he insists on the incomparable qualities of "the queen of love." It is Enobarbus, the spirit of truth, who says:

> . . . . . .
> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety: other women cloy
> The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies: for vilest things
> Become themselves in her . . .

Again and again Shakespeare makes her equal to himself:

> No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
> A pair so famous . . .

One might even push conjecture further and find a vague analogy in science. Every chemical element has an atomic weight according to which it unites with other elements. Each of these elements is negatively electric, we are told, to the element above it in the tables, and positively electric to the one below. Mary Fitton was so strong that she seems to have been the positive or masculine element and Shakespeare so gentle-sensitive that he was the feminine element in the strange union. The soul has not always the sex of the body.

But this may rightly be called guesswork. What we know from *Antony and Cleopatra* is that Shakespeare came very near complete possession of his proud, passionate, witty mistress.—

A little less and what worlds away.

His partial failure was the tragedy of his life: the throbbing hours of possession his heritage of joy.

Before parting with Shakespeare after these twenty-five years of loving intimacy, I must clear him from one reproach, for it is brought against him by his own kin. Emerson finds high words with which to praise him; he calls him "master

of the revels to mankind," admits that the foremost people of the world are now for some ages to be nourished "on his thoughts," their minds are "to receive *his* bias"; but at the same time he wonders regretfully that Shakespeare should not have been "wise for himself" . . .; that "the best poet led an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement." And in order that the dullest should be in no doubt as to his meaning Emerson adds that "the world still wants its poet-priest, its reconciler." . . .

Now and again in the course of these studies I have drawn attention to this side of Shakespeare's activity—a side not, I think, sufficiently realized or indeed understood by Emerson. It was hardly to be supposed that any Englishman of high genius would be found wanting in the priestly art. As a matter of fact, Shakespeare was far more of the priest than the profane player or playwright: he was not only profoundly religious; but he has given in his plays more thought and labour to defining both his faith and practice than any other world-poet, more even than Dante. The conclusions which he favoured may not please a Puritan of the Puritans who came three centuries later; but they

will, I believe, be found in another three centuries to have worn even better than Emerson's; for Shakespeare's mind swings in a wider orbit.

Let me try just to state what Shakespeare thought and felt about the most important and enduring relations of man. Strange to say, Shakespeare was more of a Christian than Emerson himself. Trying to define the method and secret of Jesus, Matthew Arnold declares that repentance was the method, and the secret, inward happiness or peace. Shakespeare would have accepted at least half this teaching. As early in his life as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Act V, Scene 4), and as late as *The Tempest* (Act V, Scene 1), he preaches repentance. Here are the passages:

> Who by repentance is not satisfied
> Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased.
> By penitence the Eternal's wrath's appeased:

And again fifteen years later:

> . . . the rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
> The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
> Not a frown further. . . .

Emerson would not have accepted this first article of the Christian faith: for Emerson

disliked repentance as much as his teacher Goethe.

But though Shakespeare believed in repentance as earnestly as any Christian Father, he never goes on to promise, with Matthew Arnold, that repentance will bring peace, much less inward happiness. Shakespeare seems to have regarded repentance as natural to the sinner, godly repentance, too, as a Puritan would say, that is repentance, "and a clear life ensuing."

In another way Shakespeare, starting with repentance, goes further than Matthew Arnold. Again and again he insists that after repentance forgiveness is obligatory; he will not use "a frown further." Towards the end of his life he pushed this creed to its ultimate: *Cymbeline* dates probably from 1610-11: it ends in reconciliation, just as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* end, in defiance of dramatic requirements, Shakespeare having some desire apparently to be what Emerson wanted—a "reconciler"!

The climax of the play is centred in Iachimo's repentance. In his latter days Shakespeare had no vision of a character to whom repentance would be impossible. Iachimo then (Act V, Scene 5) is forced to his knees by his "heavy

conscience," and this is how Shakespeare-Posthumus treats him:

> . . . Kneel not to me:
> The power that I have on you is to spare you;
> The malice towards you to forgive you: live
> And deal with others better. . . .

Curiously enough, Shakespeare does not end with this word of his *alter ego* Posthumus. Again and again, as we have seen, he has used Cymbeline the king as his masque, and now he gives Cymbeline the final judgment:

> CYM. . . . Nobly doom'd!
> We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law;
> Pardon's the word to all. . . .

At the risk of being again accused of pushing conjecture to absurd lengths, I must confess that this passage seems to me expressly used by Shakespeare to praise his son-in-law Dr. Hall, whose piety was traditional. Hall probably in talk had said something about universal forgiveness, and Shakespeare wished to give him credit for it, and then found the finest word for his own belief:

> Pardon's the word to all.

At his best moments Shakespeare, I think, felt clearly enough that no man is responsible

for his actions any more than he is responsible for his face: free-will even to the casuist must be narrowly limited. In any case this is his supreme word on human justice:

> Pardon's the word to all. . . .

The very form of the phrase is as characteristic as the thought: it reminds me of Hamlet's "The rest is silence."

The last years of his life spent in the company of his pious daughter and son-in-law seem to have influenced Shakespeare profoundly. Though he had probably passed only a year or so in Stratford when he wrote *The Tempest,* it is plain already that he has been affected by the fervent faith of his relatives. In the Epilogue to *The Tempest* he shows for the first time a belief in prayer or at least a willingness to use it and a recognition of a personal deity. The words are:

> And my ending is despair,
> Unless I be relieved by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself and frees all faults, . . .

These words show that at the last, when standing within the shadow, Shakespeare was very close indeed to the Christian attitude.

But if our gentle poet believed in repentance

and prayer as fully as the devout Christian believes in them, and carried the duty to forgiveness, too, as far as St. Francis himself would have carried it, it must be admitted that there his Christianity ends. Posthumus takes pains to assure us that he does not believe in any personal life after death. He says to the Gaoler:

> I tell thee, fellow, there are none want eyes to direct them the way I am going, but such as wink and will not use them.

And the First Gaoler in Shakespeare's own voice affirms the meaning in his answer:

> What an infinite mock is this, that a man should have the best use of eyes to see the way of blindness. . . .

To Shakespeare as to Emerson, the end of life is annihilation so far as personal identity is concerned.

Yet just as Shakespeare was more of a Christian than Emerson, more convinced of the efficacy of repentance, of the need of prayer, of the joy of forgiveness, so he was more of a pagan in morals, or at least more tolerant. Emerson finds Rabelais' love of filth disgusting: he likens him to some dirty boy who writes obscene words in a public place on the sly and runs away to escape punishment.

But Shakespeare, like Jesus, had infinite tolerance for the sins of the flesh: the greatest of ethical teachers said, "Much shall be forgiven her, for she loved much," and Shakespeare through the old Countess of Rousillon insists that desire and youth are inseparable. He might have gone further, one feels, and justified what is at once natural and beautiful. Here are the words which I have shown elsewhere are to be taken as his words:

> . . . this thorn
> Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
> Our blood to us, this to our blood is born;
> It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
> Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth: . . .

Now if one considers the perfect tolerance of these passages and then puts side by side the saying of Jesus:

> Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone

and Shakespeare's:

> Pardon's the word to all . . .,

it becomes clear that Shakespeare must have been very like Jesus. Curious to me it is and infinitely touching that both were continually called "gentle": curious, too, that Shakespeare, coming sixteen centuries later, and having shed off the

superstitious belief in a life after death, should still hold practically the same faith: the two greatest men of whom time has any record in perfect agreement on the essentials of faith and practice.

It seems to me infinitely characteristic that whereas the George Eliots and Emersons and all the Puritans cling to the childish morality of Pauline Christianity and discard as useless the intense religious emotion, the forgiveness and sympathy and pity—the true piety which Jesus brought to men in His Gospel of Glad Tidings, Shakespeare with a finer instinct discards the puerile morality while keeping the sacred emotion.

Let me go further still: there is one passage in Shakespeare that sings itself in my ears—a couple of lines fraught with the rarest spirit-beauty, throbbing, too, with personal feeling—it is in *Richard II.:* Shakespeare, speaking casually of a bishop who died and was buried in Venice, says he gave

> His body to that pleasant country's earth
> And his pure soul unto his captain Christ. . . .

Here we have gentle Shakespeare speaking with the very accent of Jesus: nothing in the *Imitation,*

nothing of St. Francis seems to me to breathe the very spirit of the Master so sweetly as this—

> . . . and there at Venice gave,
> His body to that pleasant country's earth
> And his pure soul unto his captain Christ. . . .

After abusing me for making Shakespeare too passionate-sensual, the critics are now beginning to complain that I have made him too saintly. The extremes of his genius offend their undue love of mediocrity: they would do better to consider whether this angelic temper and sweet-thoughted aspiration are not the natural accompaniment, perhaps even an inevitable outgrowth, of that passionate sensuality they so detest and despise—the strong root and scented flower of the divine nectary whose name is Love.

INDEX

Abbess, 33, 34, 149, 211.
Achilles, 199.
Adonis, 122, 206.
Adriana, XI, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 43, 44, 51, 149, 211.
Agincourt, 238.
Agrippa, 222.
Ajax, XVII, 103, 199, 200, 201.
Albany, 182.
Alcibiades, 188.
Alexander, 200.
All's Well that Ends Well, 53, 65, 83, 134, 149, 150, 151, 212, 276.
Andromache, 199.
Anne, 36, 37, 38, 51, 52, 59.
Antigone, 67.
Antiochus, 252.
Antipholus, 26, 32, 34.
Antonio, 256.
Antony, X, 13, 14, 214, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232, 233, 235, 284, 288.
Antony and Cleopatra, XV, 13, 158, 161, 196, 198, 214, 215, 224, 225, 247, 292.
Apemantus, 187.
Arden, Mary, 246.
Argus, XVII, 98, 201.
Ariel, 270, 272, 292.
Aristophanes, 138.
Aristotle, 234.
Arnold, Matthew, 240, 296, 297.
Arthur, 43, 44, 46, 47, 66.
As You Like It, 89, 91, 99.
Aufidius, 240, 241.
Austria, 44, 45.
Autolycus, 262.

Balfour of Burleigh, I.
Balzac, I.
Bandello, 69.
Bankside, 52, 54.
Bardolph, 53.
Bassanio, 61, 98, 142, 205.
Bastard, 70.
Beatrice, XI, 85, 86, 89, 115, 163, 164, 197, 260, 265.
Benedick, 85, 87, 118.
Bennett, Arnold, 133.
Benvolio, 69, 74, 75.
Bertram, 65, 135, 136, 140, 142, 143, 144, 146, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 160, 193, 195, 234, 279.
Bernard Shaw, 66.
Bianca, 39.
Biron, 70, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 120, 139, 148, 160, 195, 212.
Blanch (*King John*), 49.
Bottom, II, 56, 66.
Boult, 251, 257, 258, 259.
Boyet, 102.
Brandes, Dr., 145.
Brawne, Fanny, 196.
Briareus, XVII, 201.

Brooke, Arthur, 69, 70.
Browning, XVII.
Brutus, 166, 203, 234, 240.
Byron, 2.

Cade, Jack, 22.
Cæsar, 158, 217, 219, 222, 223, 225, 228, 232, 233, 234, 235, 290.
Caius Marcius, 241.
Caleb Balderstone, I.
Caliban, 272.
Capulet, 75.
Carlyle, 273.
Cassandra, 203.
Cassio, 174, 175.
Cervantes, 21.
Chamberlain, Mr., 267.
Chapman, XVII, 199, 200.
Charmian, 228.
Chettle, 49.
Clarendon, 153.
Claudio, 85.
Cleopatra, XI, 14, 155, 214, 216, 217, 218, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 247, 265, 278, 282, 284, 285.
Coleridge, XVIII, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 36, 134, 135, 137, 251, 256.
Comedy of Errors, The, XI, 22, 26, 49, 52, 149, 211.
Condell, 8.
Constance, XI, 43, 44, 46, 47, 66.
Coriolanus, XII, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246.
Cordelia, 164.
Costard, 96.
Creon, 67.
"Cressid," XI, 208.
Cressida, 155, 157, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 213, 223, 232, 265.
Cromwell, XIV.
Cupid, 75, 87, 95.
Cymbeline, 259 263 264, 265, 269, 299.

Dame Quickly, 53, 68.
Dante, XVII, 115, 137, 162, 163, 213, 280, 296.
Dauphin, 18.
Daventry, Mrs., 288.
Dekker, 200, 201, 202.
Demetrius, 55. 58.
Desdemona, 20, 164, 165, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 265.
Dian, 74, 116.
Diana, 75, 154, 193.
Diomedes, 209, 210, 213.
Doll Tearsheet, 68.
Don Pedro, 87.
Dowden, Professor, 145.
Drake, 239.
Dromio of Ephesus, 29.
Duchess of York, 39.
Duncan, 180.

Edgar, 183, 184, 251.
Edmund, 182, 183.
Edward, 16, 37.
Elinor (*King John*), 44, 49.
Elizabeth, Queen, 238.
Emerson, 147, 289, 295, 296, 297, 299, 300.
English Review, The, 276.
Enobarbus, 218, 220, 226, 227, 228, 229, 285, 292.
Eros, 220, 221, 290.
Essex, 54.
Eversley Edition, 6, 141.

Faerie Queen, The, 6.
Falstaff, 22, 53, 68, 76, 104, 258.
Faust, 271, 272.
Ferdinand, 264, 270, 274.
First Gaoler (*Cymbeline*), 300.

First Part of King Henry VI., 7, 8, 9, 13, 22, 23, 37, 38, 52, 53.
First Lord (*All's Well that Ends Well*), 159.
First Senator (*Timon*), 189.
Fitton, Mary, XI, XII, XIII, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 85, 86, 88, 89, 91, 92, 98, 100, 104, 106, 107, 109, 114, 115, 120, 121, 125, 127, 129, 130, 131 132, 134, 135, 138, 143, 149, 151, 154, 155, 157, 158, 164, 165, 168, 176, 177, 178, 193, 194, 195, 218, 219, 220, 222, 223, 228, 231, 234, 235, 247, 249, 255, 260, 267, 269, 276, 280, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 291, 292, 293.
Flavius, 160.
Fletcher, 137, 289, 290.
Florizel, 262.
Fra Angelico, 21.
Francesca, 2, 68, 137.
Fulvia, 225, 226.

Glaucus and Silla, 6.
Gloucester, 36, 59, 184.
Goethe, 2, 21, 68, 163, 271, 272, 277.
Goneril, XI, 182, 183, 190.
Gratiano, 61, 70, 81.
Gretchen, 2, 68.
Greene, 53.
Guildenstern, 159, 160, 172.

Hall, Dr., 299.
Hamlet, X, XIV, 107, 150, 151, 165, 166, 173, 174, 181, 197, 198, 266, 287.
Hamlet, 76, 80, 107, 138, 159, 160, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 185, 214, 215, 218, 234, 236, 254, 255, 256, 261, 263, 266, 268, 290.
Hamnet, 42, 49, 262.
Harry V., 176.
Harvey, Gabriel, 5.
Hathaway, Ann, 25, 30, 50.
Hector, 198.
Heine, 145.
Helen, 203.
Helena, 55, 56, 58, 65, 83, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 151, 152, 153, 156.
Hemyng, 8.
Henry V., 258.
Henry VII., XIV.
Henry VIII., 259, 290.
Hero and Leander, 4.
Hero, 85.
Herford, Profesor, 6, 9, 10, 57, 141, 165, 188, 251, 257.
Hermia, 55, 56, 58.
Herbert, Lord William, 101, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 125, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 137, 143, 146, 154, 155, 157, 158, 171, 172, 178, 193, 194, 200, 233, 267, 268, 284, 287, 291.
Hermione, 260, 287.
Hesperus, 140.
Holinshed, 17, 36, 239.
Homer, 137, 199, 200.
Horace, 5.
Hortensio, 40.
Hotspur, 70, 164, 176.
Hubert, 46.
Hyperion, 169.

Iachimo, 266, 268, 298.
Iago, 177, 277.
Imogen, 2, 177, 263, 264.
Iras, 233.

Jaques, 256.
Joan of Arc, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 51, 241.
Johnson, Dr., 146, 152, 156.

Jonson, Ben, XVII, 49, 50, 200, 201, 257, 278.
Judith, XII, 249, 258, 289.
Julia, XI, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 68, 71, 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 103, 115, 164, 197.
Juliet, XI, 61, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 77, 78, 81, 84, 86, 103, 115, 166, 191, 207, 208, 250, 264, 265.
Julius Cæsar, 151, 152, 181, 203.

Katharina (*Taming of the Shrew, The*), XI, 39, 40, 41, 42, 52.
Katherine (*Love's Labour's Lost*), 109.
Keats, 196.
Kemp, 72, 80.
Kent, 160.
King John, XI, 42, 43, 44, 49.
King Philip, 44, 45, 46, 47.

La Comédie Humaine, I.
Laertes, 171, 173.
Lafeu, 159, 160.
Lang, Mr. Andrew, 91.
Lavina, 8.
Lear, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 190, 197, 198, 257, 259, 261, 265, 266, 267, 289, 292.
Leonardo da Vinci, 83.
Leontes, 260, 261, 265, 266, 287.
Longaville, 104.
Lover's Complaint, The, 129, 137, 287.
Love's Labour's Lost, 22, 35, 51, 57, 70, 78, 79, 83, 91, 92, 93, 108, 109, 115, 120, 195, 197, 202, 213, 224, 282.
Lucetta, 58, 59, 60.
Luciana, 28, 29.
Lucrece, 5, 22.
Luther, 213.
Lysander, 55, 58.
Lysimachus, 257.

Macbeth, 80, 179, 180.
Macbeth, 80, 150, 151, 179, 180, 181, 198, 289, 290.
Macbeth, Lady, XI, 179, 180, 182.
Madame Bovary, 2.
Mamillius, 49, 261.
Manon Lescaut, 2.
Marcus Aurelius, 21, 253.
Mardian, 228.
Margaret, 10, 11, 12, 16, 22, 23, 38, 39, 51, 52.
Margaret (Charles Reade's), 84.
Marina, XII, 249, 250, 251, 257, 258, 262, 263.
Marlowe, 4, 53.
Marston, 200.
Martin, St., 198.
Measure for Measure, 107.
Memenius, 160.
Merchant of Venice, The, 57, 70, 98, 241.
Mercutio, 68, 70, 76, 88, 94, 98, 138.
Meredith, 162.
Michelangelo, 150, 163.
Midsummer Night's Dream, A, 53, 54, 57, 58.
Mignon, 2.
Milton, 2.
Miranda, XII, 249, 250, 269, 270.
Mortimer, 13, 14, 16, 21.
Much Ado about Nothing, 87, 89, 91, 118, 121, 133, 156, 248.

Nerissa, 59, 61.
Nero, 253.
Night Watch, The, 67.
Noble Stranger, The, 5.

Nurse (*Romeo and Juliet*), 68, 72, 85, 138, 164, 265.

Octavia, 230, 231, 233, 284.
Ophelia, 89, 107, 150, 164, 165, 166, 171, 172, 173.
Orsino, Duke, X, 165.
Osric, 159.
Othello, 19, 20, 165, 168, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 194, 288.
Othello, 165, 168, 174, 176, 177, 178, 179, 181, 192, 194, 197, 198, 261, 288, 289.
Oxford, 288.

Painter, 69.
Palace of Pleasure, The, 69.
Pandar, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 257.
Pandulph, 45.
Parolles, 135, 141, 153, 154, 157, 160, 212, 268, 279.
Passionate Pilgrim, The, 282.
Paul, St., IX, 160.
Paulina, 260, 261.
Pembroke, 170.
Perdita, XII, 2, 249, 250, 262, 263, 265.
Pericles, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 259, 292.
Petruchio, 40.
Phebe, 87, 88.
Phrynia, 108, 190.
Pietà of the Rodanini Palace, 150.
Pistol, 53, 141, 241.
Plutarch, 214, 215, 242.
Polonius, 170, 177.
Pompey, 217, 219.
Portia, XI, 59, 61, 62, 64, 68, 73, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 98, 103, 109, 115, 129, 141, 142, 151, 164, 166, 197, 250.
Posthumus, 14, 168, 261, 266, 267, 268, 298, 299.
Princess of France, 94.
Prospero, 251, 268, 273, 275.
Proteus, 57, 59, 60, 61, 63, 82.
Puck, 56.
Pupillus, 5.

Queen Elizabeth, 37, 72.
Quickly, Dame, 68.

Rabelais, 300.
Raleigh, 239.
Rape of Lucrece, The, 5.
Raphael, 115.
Reade, Charles, 84.
Regan, 182, 183, 190.
Rembrandt, 67.
Richard (Duke of Gloucester), 36, 37, 39.
Richard II., 35, 66, 302.
Richard III., 36, 39, 51, 59, 179, 218, 277.
Richardson, John, 25.
Robinson Crusoe, 2.
Rodanini Palace, 150.
Romeo, 37, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74, 76, 203, 208.
Romeo and Juliet, XI, 57, 66, 67, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79, 85, 93, 108, 115, 120, 161, 195, 215, 223.
Rosalind, XI, 2, 78, 79, 86, 87, 88, 89, 99, 166, 197.
Rosaline, XI, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 93, 95, 98, 196, 197, 204.
Rosaline (*Love's Labour's Lost*), XI, 35, 88, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 109, 110, 112, 113, 139, 166, 195, 197, 202, 203, 213, 224, 282.
Rosencrantz, 159, 160, 172.
Rouen, 17.
Rousillon, Countess of, 146, 147, 148, 149, 160, 300.

Sacred Mount, 238.

St. Francis, 302.
Salisbury, 45.
Sandells, Fulk, 25.
Scott, I.
Second Mrs. Tanqueray, The, 23.
Sharp, Becky, 2.
Shaw, Bernard, 66.
Silvius, 87, 88.
Sonnets:
23, p. 122.
26, p. 122.
33, p. 122.
99, p. 123.
121, p. 17.
127, p. 99, 104, 106.
130, p. 105, 123.
132, p. 290.
140, p. 101, 126.
144, p. 131.
147, p. 126.
148, p. 104, 106.
150, p. 105, 127, 179, 226.
151, p. 127.
152, p. 128.
Sophocles, 67, 137, 138.
Southampton, 54.
Spencer, 138.
Stratford, XII, 7, 42, 43, 248, 289.
Suffolk, 10, 11, 12, 16, 23, 25, 37, 51.
Swinburne, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 146, 251, 252, 256.
Sycorax, 292.
Sylvia, 58, 62, 63, 64.

Talbot, 10, 15, 16, 17, 21.
Taming of the Shrew, The, XI, 39, 51.
Tamora, 8, 22, 51.
Tearsheet, Doll, 68, 258.
Tempest, The, XII, XV, 248, 259, 264, 269, 271, 272, 273, 289, 291, 296, 298, 299.
Temple Gardens, 9.
Tennyson, 289.
Thersites, 206, 277.
Third Part of Henry VI., 36.
Thyreus, 219, 232, 284.
Titus Andronicus, 7, 8, 22, 38.
Timandra, 108, 190.
Timon, 108, 181, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 197, 198, 200, 261, 266, 292.
Titania, 56, 66.
Tolstoi, 182.
Troilus, 204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 284, 288.
Troilus and Cressida, 196, 198, 199, 200, 202, 204.
Trojan, 211, 284.
Troublesome Reign of King John, The, 43, 70.
Troy, 208.
Twelfth Night, 65, 89, 91, 118, 165.
Two Gentlemen of Verona, 39, 53, 57, 58, 65, 71, 117, 118, 121.
Two Noble Kinsmen, The, 9.
Tyler, Mr., 72, 127.
Tyre, 256.

Ulysses, 209, 210, 211.

Valentine, 58.
Venus and Adonis, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 22, 74, 122, 206.
Virgil, 280.
Viola, 89, 140, 151, 165.
Volumnia, XII, 243, 246.

Wells, H. G., 272.
Whitehall, 93, 100, 120.
Winter's Tale, The, 49, 177, 260, 263, 298.
Wolsey, XIV, 290.
Wordsworth, 2.

Xanthippe of Socrates, 50.

Duke University Libraries
D00336250J